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BIOGRAPHY

THE LIFE OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

BY SIR ARTHUR HELPS, K.C.B.

INTRODUCTION BY E. A. HELPS

SIR ARTHUR HELPS, born in 1813. Educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. Clerk of Privy Council, 1860–75. K.C.B., 1872. Died in 1875.

THE LIFE OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

SIR ARTHUR HELPS

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INTRODUCTION

THIS *Life of Columbus*[1] is one of a series of books on famous personages who played an important part in the conquest and colonisation of the New World. The series (which includes Columbus, Las Casas, Pizarro, and Cortes) was compiled from Sir A. Helps' *Spanish Conquest in America*, under the author's supervision.

In this reprint I have made a fuller use of the interesting matter contained in the *Spanish Conquest in America*, treating of early Portuguese discoveries prior to Columbus' first voyage, in the belief that it will give the reader a clearer conception of the period. As the author says, in his preface to an earlier work on the same subject, "I generally find I gain most from those books which presume the reader to be most ignorant." I have also added some notes from the *Spanish Conquest*, not given in the original edition of the Life, and an appendix, containing notes on Columbus' ships, his route, etc., taken from Washington Irving's *Life of Columbus*. With the exception of the additions above mentioned, the book remains exactly as it was issued by the author in 1868.

It would be a work of supererogation to insist upon the claims to interest of the life of one whose name will ring in the ears of men for all time; whose indomitable spirit changed the face of the earth for us. Moreover, the author has dealt with this and other aspects of Columbus' life in his preface in more felicitous terms than I can command; but it may not be out of place to emphasise the wide differences which separate Columbus' enterprises from those of modern explorers.

In the first place, the latter are not subject to the mental

[1] In issuing this reprint the publishers are indebted to the courtesy of Messrs. G. Bell and Sons in allowing them to bring out this edition considerably in advance of the expiration of Messrs. Bell's copyright.

terrors, begotten of ignorance and superstition, which possessed the early explorers, to whom these terrors loomed large. Nor have they to undergo the long struggles for recognition, the humiliations of a suitor at court, the ridicule of those who refused to believe in their ideas, and the opposition of enemies, such as Columbus had to endure in order to obtain the means necessary to carry out his project. Then, too, the modern explorer, fortified by a scientific knowledge not dreamt of in Columbus' time, sets forth in a specially constructed ship, designed and equipped with all that science, care, and foresight can devise to make life healthy and comfortable, even luxurious.

And, if we compare modern explorers, such as Stanley and the explorers of the North Pole, with Columbus—and there is a striking resemblance in the plunge of Stanley into the Dark Continent and the setting forth of Columbus into the unknown waste of waters—though perhaps the dangers and hardships endured by these exceed those borne by Columbus, yet we do not find that they were animated by a nobler aim than he had, for it must be remembered that Columbus set forth in the spirit of a Crusader. As the author says, "The dream of his life was to make his way to the territories of Kublai Khan, or Prester John, and, with the gold obtained from such potentates as Prester John, to rebuild the Holy Sepulchre, and spread the Catholic Faith over the remotest parts of the earth."

Alas for the vain dreams and hopes of mankind! Far from accomplishing these ends, he must be held as partly responsible for the introduction of slavery into the New World.

As Sir A. Helps' writings are not widely known to the present generation, it may be well to give a brief sketch of the life and work of one who filled a not insignificant place as a man of letters in the Victorian era.

Arthur Helps, the son of Thomas Helps, the head of a large mercantile house in the city of London, was born in 1813. He was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. He very early showed a leaning to literature, for whilst at Cambridge he wrote *Thoughts in the Cloister*

and the Crowd, reflections and aphorisms on life, curiously mature for a writer of his years. On leaving Cambridge, he made his entry into official life as private secretary to Mr. Spring Rice (afterwards Lord Monteagle), Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Melbourne's administration. He afterwards went to Ireland, as private secretary to Lord Morpeth (afterwards Lord Carlisle), Secretary for Ireland. On the change of government in 1841 he left Ireland, and was appointed Commissioner of Danish and other claims (claims relating to the bombardment of Copenhagen). On relinquishing this appointment he returned to literary work and wrote *Essays written in the Intervals of Business*—essays containing much practical advice on the conduct of business—and two historical plays, *Catherine Douglas* and *King Henry the Second*. He then, in 1843, turned to what was to become his life-work. From this time all his writings bear evidence that he was devoting himself to the study of social problems—especially those bearing on the condition of the working classes—and endeavouring to rouse public opinion to the great need for reforms. The *Claims of Labour*, written in 1843, is his most serious work in this connection. It contains "Essays on the Duties of Employers" and "The Means of Improving the Health and Condition of the Labouring Classes."

In these essays one is struck by the modernity of the author's views. That he held opinions far in advance of his time on these subjects, as well as on war, government, and national policy, is abundantly evidenced in his writings, and these opinions (most of which are now generally accepted) he never ceased to urge throughout his life, either directly, as in the *Claims of Labour*, or indirectly, by essays on social subjects, sometimes using fiction as a means of pressing them. As Sir Theodore Martin (who knew him well) wrote of him, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "No man was more eager to do what he might towards obviating or curing the folly, stupidity, and selfishness to which so much of the misery, the ill-health, the suffering, and the sin of the world are due."

In the troubled times of 1848 he joined Charles Kingsley

in an endeavour to enlighten the masses by *Politics for the People;* and in 1854, when an epidemic of cholera was feared in London, he issued a pamphlet called, *Thoughts for next Summer*, in which he advocated the raising of a Health Fund by public subscription for London, to carry out "a system of efficient sanitary action by stimulating, advising, instructing, and assisting the Local Boards," a project which, however, failed from lack of public support.

In 1847 he had brought out *Friends in Council*, a series of essays dealing with social, moral, and political questions. In this book he adopted a method he followed in many of his subsequent writings, the essays being submitted for criticism and discussion to an imaginary coterie, composed of persons of opposite temperaments and views. These essays met with marked success, and they were followed by a second series in 1851.

For some time the subject of slavery had strongly attracted him; one of the essays in *Friends in Council* deals with this subject at some length, under the head, "Slavery is cruel, needless, unauthorised." He was, however, not satisfied with this, for, as he says, "the more I read on the subject the greater grew the desire to make out for myself a true and full account of it," and, after consulting Spanish records, he wrote *The Spanish Conquerors of the New World and their Bondsmen*, in which the events leading up to the introduction of slavery into the New World are treated of. In the dedication (to Dr. Phelps, Master of Sidney-Sussex College, Cambridge, an old college friend), he wrote, "My aim is to show how the black people came into the New World, how the brown people faded away from certain countries, and what part the white people had in these doings." He intended, as he says, "in the simplicity of one who has never before devoted himself to historical writing," to give a sketch of the results of Spanish conquest in their relation to the introduction of slavery. He found, however, that to do justice to his subject it would be necessary to pursue his inquiries much further, and to consult more authorities, "for much remained to be told about the early discoveries in America, which is not to be met with in its history as hitherto narrated." He therefore determined to

take a wider survey of the field of the early discoveries and conquests in America. This involved seven years' labour, and two visits to Madrid to consult and copy documents, and resulted in four volumes, completed in 1861, entitled *The Spanish Conquest in America*.

This work, though now recognised as a standard authority, did not at the time receive the appreciation it deserved. In some measure, perhaps, this may have been due to the author's habit of often interrupting the narrative to weigh motives, balance evidence, and philosophise. Be this as it may, its accuracy has never been impugned, and one of the greatest of American historians has described it as "a book that does the soul good to read."

To give an idea of the trouble the author took to insure accuracy, I may quote from a notice of his life which appeared in *The Athenæum* written by John Hullah (an intimate friend), "If ever there was a writer in reference to whom it would be said that genius and industry were convertible terms, it was he. No expenditure of toil or money did he ever allow to stand between him and a truth, of whatever kind. Were the only copy of a manuscript at Simancas, to Simancas would he go; were a book inaccessible save by purchase, he would purchase it; were it written in a language he did not know—bitter experience had given him an absolute distrust of translations—he would set to work to study that language." It may be said that, though not what is called a great, he was an elegant, scholar. He was versed in five living languages, and it is perhaps worthy of mention that he took up German quite late in life.

During the seven years in which he was writing this history, he turned aside at intervals to the subjects nearest to his heart, and wrote *Companions of my Solitude*, which contains some of his deepest thoughts on certain social evils, and *Realmah*, an account of an imaginary community of lake-dwellers in the Bronze Age, in which, in describing the government, religion, and customs of the community, social and political leaders of the day, thinly disguised, are gently satirised. In *Casimir Maremma* fiction is used for conveying the author's views on emigration. He had always

felt very strongly the cruelties practised on, and sufferings endured by, animals in their service of man, and in 1873 he wrote *Animals and their Masters*, in which he endeavoured to bring home to mankind its responsibilities to the lower animals.

It would be out of place to enumerate here all Sir A. Helps' writings, but to those I have mentioned may be added *Brevia*, short essays and aphorisms, *Conversations on War and General Culture*, and *Thoughts on Government*, which embodies the knowledge and experience gained in the course of a long official life. At the present crisis in political affairs the following passage taken from it has a peculiar interest: "It would be unwise, if it were possible, to maintain the House of Lords as a Second Chamber, without considerable modifications in the constitution of that legislative body . . . that body may justly be called a victim to popular impulses which eventually is always sure to sacrifice, even its convictions, to the predominating influence of the other house." In 1875 appeared his last work, *Social Pressure*, in which he returned to the subjects which had, from his youth, engaged his attention.

So far I have only touched on Sir A. Helps' work as an author and a social reformer deeply impressed with the sufferings of humanity, but he had other gifts, including that of oratory, and might no doubt have made his mark in public life, had not his sensitive nature made him shrink from the political arena. He would, too, have found difficulty in joining any party, as the following, written in 1857, when it was suggested by his friends that he should come forward as a candidate for Cambridge University, shows: "I perceive that a man like myself, of liberal tendencies, inclined to form his own opinions upon all subjects, would come into unpleasant collision with that numerous and influential part of the constituency which enjoys a fixity of opinions, not always justified by the amount of thought bestowed in forming the opinion upon most matters of Church or State."

In 1860 he returned to official life. Lord Palmerston, who had previously asked him to accept the Chair of Poetry at Oxford, offered him the Clerkship of the Privy Council, rendered vacant by the resignation of Sir A. Bathurst.

This office he accepted, and held until his death in 1875.

As head of the Privy Council Office, he was brought into close relations with the chief members of each administration. He was treated with equal confidence by all parties, and numbered among his friends men of the most opposite views in politics, among whom were Lord Palmerston, Robert Lowe, W. E. Forster, Lord Derby, and Lord Beaconsfield. His office was no sinecure, for, besides the routine work connected with Orders in Council, it involved all the arrangements for meetings of the Privy Council and very often journeys to Balmoral and Osborne, when Her Majesty held Privy Council at these places. A supplementary department for dealing with the infectious diseases of cattle was also added to the Privy Council, which, though it afforded him opportunities for congenial work in minimising the sufferings of cattle in transit by sea and land, also entailed much work.

It was in his capacity of Clerk of the Privy Council that he came to be known to Her Majesty and the Prince Consort, who were not slow to recognise and appreciate his ability and loyal nature. In later years Her Majesty showed her reliance on his insight and judgment by asking him to edit *The Speeches and Addresses of the Prince Consort*, in the introduction to which he gave a sketch of the Prince Consort's character, that was accepted as a masterly presentment of one of the most remarkable men of the times. (This led in after years to his pen being always requisitioned, upon the death of any man of note, such as Lord Clarendon or Charles Dickens.)

In 1864 Her Majesty entrusted to him the preparation and revision of *Leaves from our Journal in the Highlands*, a book which gave the public some glimpses of the simple charms of Her Majesty's home life.

It may be truly said that Sir A. Helps was one of Her Majesty's friends; one on whom she could depend as a staunch, true, and wise counsellor. In *Queen Victoria, A Biography*, the editor records, "Sir A. Helps, who had become Clerk of the Council in 1860, and was an author of repute, was also much in her confidence, and aided and

advised her in her private and personal affairs until his death."

When at leisure, which in later years was not often, he devoted much energy and much of his means to developing an industry connected with Clay Works on his estate in Hampshire, hoping that it might ultimately lead to the formation of such an ideal industry as he had pictured in the *Claims of Labour;* but, unfortunately, this undertaking failed, and caused him much pecuniary loss and anxiety, for it involved some of his friends who had entered into it with him.

To his house in Hampshire came many of his literary friends—the Doyles, Carlyle, Kingsley, George Lewes, Ruskin, Emerson, and many others: the echoes of some of the discussions carried on there are to be found in *Friends in Council.* When it is considered that, in addition to the burden of his official, literary, and private affairs—and his sympathetic, kindly nature made him the friend, confidant, and adviser of all sorts and conditions of men—he had to fulfil the many social obligations of a public man, it may be realised that his life was a very full one: it was, in fact, too full for one who did not possess a robust constitution.

Returning to Sir A. Helps' literary work, it may be said that the very simplicity and ease of his style led many of his readers to consider that the thoughts and opinions put forward so quietly, and expressed in such simple language, could not be very deep; but his aim was to engage the interest of the general public in the social reforms he advocated, " by applying his gentle and ever busy mind to such discussions as purifies the thought, informs the pity, and secures the forbearance of mankind " (as one who knew him well wrote of him), and he showed the *ars celare artem* in his methods. Further, this simplicity of style, joined with the moderation and tolerance with which he expressed his strongest convictions and most earnest hopes, was entirely characteristic. Indeed of him it may be truly said, *Le style c'est l'homme même.*

It is perhaps worthy of record that all his writings were dictated, that he rarely altered what was thus written, and

that he had the rare power of being able to dictate upon two or three totally dissimilar subjects at the same time.

E. A. HELPS.

The following is a list of the works of Sir Arthur Helps:—

Thoughts in the Cloister and the Crowd, 1835; Essays written in the Intervals of Business, 1841; Catherine Douglas (drama), 1843; Henry II. (drama), 1843; The Claims of Labour, 1844 (2nd edition, 1845); Friends in Council, a series of Readings and Discourses thereon, 1847 (another edition, 1851); Conquerors of the New World, 1848; Companions of my Solitude, 1851; A Letter on Uncle Tom's Cabin, 1852; Friends in Council: Some Thoughts for next Summer, 1853; A New Series, 1859; Spanish Conquest in America, 4 vols., 1855-61; Oulita the Serf, 1858; Organisation in Daily Life: an Essay, 1862; Realmah, 1868; Life of Las Casas, the Apostle of the Indians, 1868; Life of Columbus, 1869; Life of Pizarro, 1869; Casimir Maremma, 1870 (another edition, 1873); Brevia, short Essays and Aphorisms, 1871; Conversations on War and General Culture, 1871; Life of Hernando Cortez, 1871; Life and Labours of Mr. Brassey, 1872; Thoughts upon Government, 1872; Some Talk about Animals and their Masters, 1873 (new edition, 1883); Ivan de Biron, 1874; Social Pressure, 1875.

Sir Arthur Helps edited the Principal Speeches and Addresses of Prince Consort, 1862; Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands, by Queen Victoria, 1868; Work and Wages, by T. Brassey the Younger, 1872 (7th edition, 1888).

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PREFACE

THIS Life of Columbus is one of a series of biographies prepared under my superintendence, and for the most part taken verbatim from my *History of the Spanish Conquest in America.*

That work was written chiefly with a view to illustrate the history of slavery, and not to give full accounts of the deeds of the discoverers and conquerors of the New World, much less to give a condensed memoir of each of them.

It has, therefore, been necessary to rearrange and add considerably to these materials, and for this assistance I am indebted to the skill and research of Mr. Herbert Preston Thomas.

Perhaps there are few of the great personages in history who have been more talked about and written about than Christopher Columbus, the discoverer of America. It might seem, therefore, that there is very little that is new to be said about him. I do not think, however, that this is altogether the case. Absorbed in, and to a certain extent overcome by the contemplation of the principal event, we have sometimes, perhaps, been mistaken as to the causes which led to it. We are apt to look upon Columbus as a person who knew that there existed a great undiscovered continent, and who made his way directly to the discovery of that continent—springing at one bound from the known to the unknown. Whereas, the dream of Columbus's life was to make his way by an unknown route to what was known,

or to what he considered to be known. He wished to find out an easy pathway to the territories of Kublai Khan, or Prester John.

Neither were his motives such as have been generally supposed. They were, for the most part, purely religious. With the gold gained from potentates such as Kublai Khan, the Holy Sepulchre was to be rebuilt, and the Catholic Faith was to be spread over the remotest parts of the earth.

Columbus had all the spirit of a crusader, and, at the same time, the investigating nature of a modern man of science. The Arabs have a proverb that a man is more the son of the age in which he lives than of his own father. This was not so with Columbus; he hardly seems to belong at all to his age. At a time when there was never more of worldliness and self-seeking; when Alexander Borgia was Pope; when Louis the Eleventh reigned in France, Henry the Seventh in England, and Ferdinand the Catholic in Arragon and Castille—about the three last men in the world to become crusaders—Columbus was penetrated with the ideas of the twelfth century, and would have been a worthy companion of Saint Louis in that pious king's crusade.

Again, at a time when Aristotle and "the Angelic Doctor" ruled the minds of men with an almost unexampled tyranny: when science was more dogmatic than theology; when it was thought a sufficient and satisfactory explanation to say that bodies falling to the earth descended because it is their nature to descend — Columbus regarded natural phenomena with the spirit of inductive philosophy that would belong to a follower of Lord Bacon.

Perhaps it will be found that a very great man seldom does belong to his period, as other men do

to theirs. Machiavelli [1] says that the way to renovate states is always to go back to first principles, especially to the first principles upon which those states were founded. The same law, if law it be, may hold good as regards the renovation of any science, art, or mode of human action. The man who is too closely united in thought and feeling with his own age, is seldom the man inclined to go back to these first principles.

It is very noticeable in Columbus that he was a most dutiful, unswerving, and uninquiring son of the Church. The same man who would have taken nothing for granted in scientific research, and would not have held himself bound by the authority of the greatest names in science, never ventured for a moment to trust himself as a discoverer on the perilous sea of theological investigation.

In this respect Las Casas, though a churchman, was very different from Columbus. Such doctrines as that the Indians should be somewhat civilised before being converted, and that even baptism might be postponed to instruction—doctrines that would have found a ready acceptance from the good bishop —would have met with small response from the soldierly theology of Columbus.

The whole life of Columbus shows how rarely men of the greatest insight and foresight, and also of the greatest perseverance, attain the exact ends they aim at. In this respect all such men partake the career of the alchemists, who did not transmute other metals into gold, but made valuable discoveries in chemistry. So with Columbus. He did not rebuild the Holy Sepulchre; he did not lead a

[1] Machiavelli was contemporary with Columbus. No two men could have been more dissimilar; and Machiavelli was thoroughly a product of his age, and a man who entirely belonged to it.

new crusade; he did not find his Kublai Khan, or his Prester John; but he brought into relation the New World and the Old.

It is impossible to read without the deepest interest the account from day to day of his voyages. It has always been a favourite speculation with historians, and, indeed, with all thinking men, to consider what would have happened from a slight change of circumstances in the course of things which led to great events. This may be an idle and a useless speculation, but it is an inevitable one. Never was there such a field for this kind of speculation as in the voyages, especially the first one, of Columbus. The first point of land that he saw, and landed at, is as nearly as possible the central point of what must once have been the United Continent of North and South America. The least change of circumstance might have made an immense difference in the result. The going to sleep of the helmsman, the unshipping of the rudder, (which did occur in the case of *The Pinzon*), the slightest mistake in taking an observation, might have made, and probably did make, considerable change in the event. During that memorable first voyage of Columbus, the gentlest breeze carried with it the destinies of future empires. Had he made his first discovery of land at a point much southward of that which he did discover, South America might have been colonised by the Spaniards with all the vigour that belonged to their first efforts at colonisation; and, being a continent, might not afterwards have been so easily wrested from their sway by the maritime nations.

On the other hand, had some breeze, big with the fate of nations, carried Columbus northwards, it would hardly have been left for the English, more

than a century afterwards, to found those Colonies which have proved to be the seeds of the greatest nation that the world is likely to behold.

It was, humanly speaking, singularly unfortunate for Spanish dominion in America, that the earliest discoveries of the Spaniards were those of the West India Islands. A multiplicity of governors introduced confusion, feebleness, and want of system, into colonial government. The numbers, comparatively few, of the original inhabitants in each island, were rapidly removed from the scene of action; and the Spaniards lacked, at the beginning, that compressing force which would have been found in the existence of a body of natives who could not have been removed by the outrages of Spanish cruelty, the strength of Spanish liquors, or the virulence of Spanish diseases.[1]

The Monarchs of Spain, too, would have been compelled to treat their new discoveries and conquests more seriously. To have held the country at all, they must have held it well. It would not have been Ovandos, Bobadillas, Nicuesas, and Ojedas who could have been employed to govern, discover, conquer, colonise—and ruin by their folly—the Spanish possessions in the Indies. The work of discovery and conquest, begun by Columbus, must then have been entrusted to men like Cortes, the Pizarros, Vasco Nuñez, or the President Gasca; and a colony or a kingdom founded by any of these men might well have remained a great colony, or a great kingdom, to the present day. ARTHUR HELPS.

LONDON, *October*, 1868.

[1] The smallpox, for instance, was a disease introduced by the Spaniards, which the comparatively feeble constitution of the Indians could not withstand.

THE LIFE OF COLUMBUS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS — DISCOVERY OF THE CANARY ISLANDS—BÉTHENCOURT—PORTUGUESE DISCOVERIES IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY UNDER PRINCE HENRY

Modern familiarity with navigation renders it difficult for us to appreciate adequately the greatness of the enterprise which was undertaken by the discoverers of the New World. Seen by the light of science and of experience, the ocean, if it has some real terrors, has no imaginary ones. But it was quite otherwise in the fifteenth century. Geographical knowledge was but just awakening, after ages of slumber; and throughout those ages the wildest dreams had mingled fiction with fact. Legends telling of monsters of the deep, jealous of invasion of their territory; of rocks of loadstone, powerful enough to extract every particle of iron from a passing ship; of stagnant seas and fiery skies; of wandering saints and flying islands; all combined to invest the unknown with the terrors of the supernatural, and to deter the explorer of the great ocean. The half-decked vessels that crept along the Mediterranean shores were but ill-fitted to bear the brunt of the furious waves of the Atlantic. The now indispensable sextant was but clumsily anticipated by the newly

invented astrolabe. The use of the compass had scarcely become familiar to navigators, who indeed but imperfectly understood its properties. And who could tell, it was objected, that a ship which might succeed in sailing down the waste of waters would ever be able to return, for would not the voyage home be a perpetual journey up a mountain of sea?

But the same tradition which set forth the difficulties of reaching the undiscovered countries promised a splendid reward to the successful voyager. Rivers rolling down golden sand, mountains shining with priceless gems, forests fragrant with rich spices were among the substantial advantages to be expected as the result of the enterprise. "Our quest there," said Peter Martyr,[1] "is not for the vulgar products of Europe." The proverb *Omne ignotum pro magnifico* was abundantly illustrated. And there was another object, besides gain, which was predominant in the minds of almost all the early explorers, namely, the spread of the Christian religion. This desire of theirs, too, seems to have been thoroughly genuine and deep-seated; and it may be doubted whether the discoveries would have been made at that period but for the impulse given to them by the most religious minds longing to promote, by all means in their power, the spread of what, to them, was the only true and saving faith. "I do not," says a candid historian [2] of that age, "imagine that I shall persuade the world that our intent was only to be preachers; but on the other hand the world must not fancy that our intent was merely to be traders." There is much to blame in the conduct of the first discoverers in Africa and America; it is, however, but just to acknowledge that the love of

[1] See Notes. [2] Faria y Sousa.

gold was by no means the only motive which urged them to such endeavours as theirs. To appreciate justly the intensity of their anxiety for the conversion of the heathen, we must keep in our minds the views then universally entertained of the merits and efficacy of mere formal communion with the Church, and the fatal consequences of not being within that communion.

A man so enlightened as Las Casas scorns passages brought against him in argument from the works of heathen writers, men who are now living in hell, as he says: and Columbus, in giving an account of his third voyage to the Catholic sovereigns, says, that in temporal matters he has only a "*blanca*" for the offertory, and that in spiritual matters he is so apart from the holy sacraments of the holy church that, if he were to die where he is, his soul would be forgotten (*que se olvidara desta anima si se aparta acá del cuerpo*). "Weep for me," he says, "ye that are charitable, true, or just."

And doubtless in the minds of the common people, the advantage of this communion with the church stood at the highest.

This will go a long way towards explaining the wonderful inconsistency, as it seems to us, of the most cruel and wicked men believing themselves to be good Christians and eminent promoters of the faith, if only they baptised, before they slew, their fellow-creatures. And the maintenance of such church principles will altogether account for the strange oversights which pure and high minds have made in the means of carrying out those principles, fascinated as they were by the brilliancy and magnitude of the main object they had in view.

But while piety, sometimes debased into religious

fanaticism, had a large part in these undertakings, doubtless the love of adventure and the craving for novelty had their influence also. And what adventure it was! New trees, new men, new animals, new stars; nothing bounded, nothing trite, nothing which had the bloom taken off it by much previous description! The early voyagers, moreover, were like children coming out to take their first gaze into the world, with ready credulity and unlimited fancy, willing to believe in fairies and demons, Amazons and mystic islands, "forms of a lower hemisphere," and fountains of perpetual youth.

The history of African discovery begins with the discovery of the Canary Islands. These were the "Elysian fields" and "Fortunate islands" of antiquity. Perhaps there is no country in the world that has been so many times discovered, conquered, invaded, or fabled about, as these islands. There is scarcely any nation upon earth of any maritime repute that has not had to do with them. Phœnicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Moors, Genoese, Normans, Portuguese, and Spaniards of every province (Arragonese, Castilians, Gallicians, Biscayans, Andalucians) have all meddled in this matter. The Carthaginians are said to have discovered these islands, and to have reserved them as an asylum in case of extreme danger to the state. Sertorius, the Roman general who partook the fallen fortunes of Marius, is said to have meditated retreat to these "islands of the blessed," and by some writers is supposed to have gone there. Juba, the Mauritanian prince, son of Sallust's Juba, sent ships to examine them, and has left a description of them.

Then came the death of empires and darkness on

the human race, at any rate upon the face of history. When the world revived again, and especially when the knowledge of the loadstone began to be rife amongst mariners, the Canary Islands were again discovered. Petrarch is referred to by Viera to prove that the Genoese sent out an expedition to these islands. Las Casas tells us that an English or French vessel bound from France or England to Spain was driven by contrary winds to the Canary Islands, and on its return spread abroad in France an account of the voyage. The information thus obtained (and perhaps in other ways of which we have no record) stimulated Don Luis de la Cerda, Count of Clermont, great grandson of Don Alonzo the Wise of Castile, to seek for the investiture of the crown of the Canaries, which was given to him with much pomp by Clement the Sixth, at Avignon, A.D. 1344, Petrarch being present. This sceptre proved a barren one. The affairs of France, with which the new king of the Canaries was connected, drew off his attention, and he died without having visited his dominions. The next authentic information that we have of the Canary Islands is that, in the times of Don Juan the First of Castile, and of Don Enrique his son, these islands were much visited by the Spaniards. In 1399 we are told certain Andalucians, Biscayans, Guipuzcoans, with the licence of Don Enrique, fitted out an expedition of five vessels, and making a descent on the island of Lanzarote, one of the Canaries, took captive the king and queen, and one hundred and seventy of the islanders.

In 1402 a colonist appears upon the scene. This was Juan de Béthencourt, a great Norman baron, lord of St. Martin le Gaillard in the county of Eu, of Béthencourt, of Granville, of Sançerre, and other

places in Normandy, and chamberlain to Charles the Sixth of France. Those who are at all familiar with that period, and with the mean and cowardly barbarity which characterised the long continued contests between the rival factions of Orleans and Burgundy, may well imagine that any Frenchman would then be very glad to find a career in some other country. Whatever was the motive of Juan de Béthencourt, he carried out his purpose stoutly. Leaving his young wife, and selling part of his estate, he embarked at Rochelle with men and means for conquering and establishing himself in the Canary Islands. Béthencourt met with the usual difficulties, distresses, treacheries, and disasters that belong to this race of enterprising men. After his arrival at the Canaries, finding his means insufficient, he repaired to the court of Castile, did acts of homage to the king, Enrique the Third, and afterwards renewed them to his son Juan the Second, thereby much strengthening the claim which the Spanish monarchs already made to the dominion of these islands. Béthencourt, returning to the islands with renewed resources, subdued the greater part of them, reduced several of the natives to slavery, introduced the Christian faith, built churches, and established vassalage. On quitting his colony in A.D. 1405 he called all his vassals together, and represented to them that he had named for his lieutenant and governor Maciot de Béthencourt his relation; that he himself was going to Spain and to Rome to seek for a bishop for them; and he concluded his oration with these words,—

"My loved vassals, great or small, plebeians or nobles, if you have anything to ask me or to inform me of, if you find in my conduct anything to com-

plain of, do not fear to speak, I desire to do favour and justice to all the world."

The assembly he was addressing contained none of the slaves he had made. We are told, however, and that by eye-witnesses, that the poor natives themselves bitterly regretted his departure, and, wading through the water, followed his vessel as far as they could. After his visit to Spain and to Rome, he returned to his paternal domains in Normandy, where, while meditating another voyage to his colony, he died.

Maciot de Béthencourt ruled for some time successfully; but, afterwards, falling into disputes with the bishop, and things going ill with him, he sold his rights to Don Enrique the Prince of Portugal, also, as it appears, to another person, and afterwards settled in Madeira. The claims to the government of the Canary Islands were, for many years, in a most entangled state, and the right to the sovereignty over them was a constant ground of dispute between the crowns of Spain and Portugal.

Thus ended the enterprise of Juan de Béthencourt, which, though it cannot be said to have led to any very large or lasting results, yet as it was the first modern attempt of the kind, deserves to be chronicled before we enter upon Prince Henry of Portugal's long continued and connected efforts in the same direction.

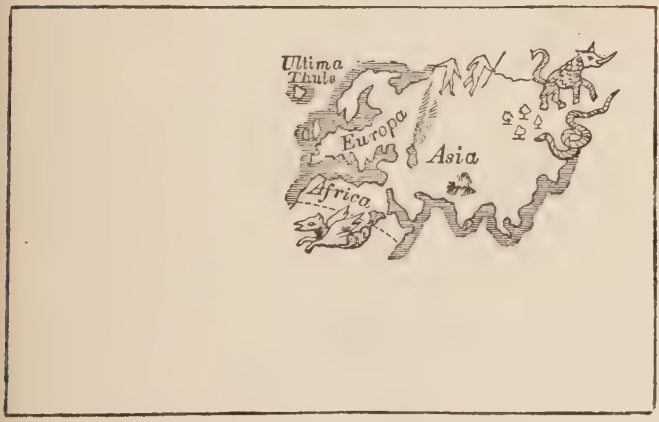
We now turn to the history of the Portuguese discoveries made, or rather caused to be made, by Prince Henry of Portugal.

The known world in the time of Prince Henry of Portugal was a very small one indeed. To realise this it is necessary for us to study our maps and charts. Without frequent reference to these, a narrative like the present forms in our mind only a

mirage of names and dates and facts, is wrongly apprehended even while we are regarding it, and soon vanishes away. The map of the world being before us, let us reduce it to the proportions it filled in Prince Henry's time; let us look at our infant world. First take away those two continents, for so we may almost call them, each much larger than a Europe, to the far west. Then cancel that square massive-looking piece to the extreme south-east; its days of penal settlements and of golden fortunes are yet to come. Then turn to Africa; instead of that form of inverted cone which it presents, and which we now know there are physical reasons for its presenting, make a scimitar shape of it, by running a slightly curved line from Juba on the eastern side to Cape Nam on the western.[1] Declare all below that line unknown. Hitherto, we have only been doing the work of destruction; but now scatter emblems of hippogriffs and anthropophagi on the outskirts of what is left on the map, obeying a maxim, not confined to the ancient geographers only: "Where you know nothing, place terrors." Looking at the map thus completed, we can hardly help thinking to ourselves, with a smile, what a small space, comparatively speaking, the known history of the world has been transacted in, up to the last four hundred years. The idea of the universality of the Roman dominion shrinks a little; and we begin to think that Ovid might have escaped his tyrant.[2]

[1] See Appendix I.

[2] "But the empire of the Romans filled the world; and when that empire fell into the hands of a single person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. The slave of imperial despotism, whether he was condemned to drag the gilded chain in Rome and his senate, or to wear out a life of exile on the barren rocks of Seriphus, or the frozen



THE WORLD KNOWN TO THE ANCIENTS

The ascertained confines of the world were now, however, to be more than doubled in the course of one century; and to Prince Henry of Portugal, as the first promoter of these vast discoveries, our attention must be directed.

This prince was born in 1394. He was the third son of John the First of Portugal and Philippa, the daughter of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. That good Plantagenet blood on the mother's side was, doubtless, not without avail to a man whose life was to be spent in continuous and insatiate efforts to work out a great idea. Prince Henry was with his father at the memorable capture of Ceuta, the ancient Seplem, in the year 1415. This town, which lies opposite to Gibraltar, was of great magnificence, and one of the principal marts in that age for the productions of the eastern world. It was here that the Portuguese first planted a firm foot in Africa; and the date of this town's capture may, perhaps, be taken as that from which Prince Henry began to meditate further and far greater conquests. His aims, however, were directed to a point long beyond the range of the mere conquering soldier. He was especially learned, for that age of the world, being skilled in mathematical and geographical knowledge. He eagerly acquired from Moors of Fez and Morocco such scanty information as could be gathered concerning the remote districts of Africa, and there were the suggestions and inducements which to a willing mind were to be found in the shrewd conjectures

banks of the Danube, expected his fate in silent despair. To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly. On every side he was encompassed with a vast extent of sea and land, which he could never hope to traverse without being discovered, seized, and restored to his irritated master."—Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, vol. i. p. 97, Oxford Edition.

of learned men, the confused records of Arabic geographers, and the fables of chivalry. The story of Prester John,[1] which had spread over Europe since the Crusades, was known to him, and the mysterious voyage of a certain wandering saint, called Saint Brendam, was not without its influence upon an enthusiastic mind. Moreover, there were many sound motives urging him to maritime discovery; among which a desire to fathom the power of the Moors, a wish to find a new outlet for traffic, and a longing to spread the blessings of the faith may be enumerated. The especial reason which impelled the prince to take the burden of discovery on himself was that neither mariner nor merchant would be likely to adopt an enterprise in which there was no clear hope of profit. It belonged, therefore, to great men and princes; and amongst such, he knew of no one but himself who was inclined to it. This is not an uncommon motive. A man sees something that ought to be done, knows of no one that will do it but himself, and so is driven to the enterprise even should it be repugnant to him.

Prince Henry, then, having once the well-grounded idea in his mind that Africa did not end, according to the common belief, at Cape Nam,[2] but that there was a region beyond that forbidding negative, seems never to have rested until he had made known that quarter of the world to his own. He fixed his abode upon the promontory of Sagres, at the southern part of Portugal, whence, for many a year, he could watch for the rising specks of white sail bringing back his captains to tell him of new countries and new men. We may wonder that he never went himself: but he might have thought that he served the

[1] See Appendix II. [2] Portuguese for *Not*.

PORTUGUESE DISCOVERIES ON THE COAST OF AFRICA

cause better by remaining at home and forming a centre from whence, if we may so express it, the electric energy of enterprise was communicated to many discoverers and collected from them. Moreover, we must recollect that he was much engaged in public affairs. In the course of his life he was three times in Africa, carrying on war against the Moors; and, at home, besides the care and trouble which the state of the Portuguese court and government must have given him, he was occupied in promoting science and encouraging education.

One night, in the year 1418, he is thought to have had a dream of promise, for on the ensuing morning he suddenly ordered two vessels to be got ready forthwith, and placed them under the command of two gentlemen of his household, Zarco and Vaz, whom he directed to proceed down the Barbary coast on a voyage of discovery. A contemporary chronicler, Azurara, tells the story more simply, and merely states that these captains were young men, who, after the ending of the Ceuta campaign, were as eager for employment as the prince for discovery; and that they were ordered on a voyage having for its object the general molestation of the Moors as well as the prosecution of discoveries beyond Cape Nam.

The Portuguese mariners had a proverb about the cape, "He who would pass Cape Not either will return or not" (*Quem passar o Cabo de Nam, ou tornará ou nam*), intimating that if he did not turn before passing the cape he would never return at all. On this occasion it was not destined to be passed, for the two captains were driven out of their course by storms, and accidentally discovered a little island, where they took refuge, and which, from that

circumstance, they called Porto Santo. "They found there," says Sousa, "a race of people in no respect arranged politically, but not altogether barbarous and savage, and possessing a kindly and most fertile soil." On their return their master was delighted with the news they brought him, more on account of its promise than its substance. In the same year he sent them out again with a third captain, Bartholomew Perestrelo, to convey a supply of seeds and animals for the newly-found island. Unfortunately, however, among the animals were some rabbits, which multiplied so rapidly that they overspread the whole island, and, by devouring every plant and blade of grass which grew there, soon changed a fruitful land into a bare wilderness.

In the following year, Zarco and Vaz, seeing from Porto Santo something that seemed like a cloud, but yet different (the origin of so much discovery, noting the difference in the likeness), built two boats, and, making for this cloud, soon found themselves alongside a beautiful island abounding in many things, but most of all in trees, on which account they gave it the name of Madeira (wood). The two discoverers landed upon the island in different places. The prince, their master, afterwards rewarded them with the captaincies of the districts adjacent to those places. To Perestrelo he gave the island of Porto Santo, to colonise it. Perestrelo, however, did not make much of his captaincy; and spent his life in endeavouring to make head against the rabbits, which were as destructive as a plague of locusts, and which by their fecundity resisted all his efforts to exterminate them. This captain has a place in history, as being the father-in-law of Columbus, who, indeed, lived at Porto Santo for some time, and here, on new-

found land, studied the cosmographical works which Perestrelo had been at pains to accumulate, meditating far bolder discoveries.

Zarco and Vaz began the cultivation of their island of Madeira, but met with an untoward event at first. In clearing the wood, they kindled a fire amongst it, which burned for seven years, we are told; and, in the end, that which had given its name to the island, and which, in the words of the historian, overshadowed the whole land, became the most deficient commodity. The captains founded churches in the island, and the King of Portugal, Don Duart, gave the temporalities to Prince Henry, and all the spiritualities to the Knights of Christ.

From this time forth, Prince Henry prosecuted his explorations with a fixity of purpose which could not but ensure success. Through every discouragement he persevered still. Many a Swiss peak has gone through three phases. It has been pronounced, first, "inaccessible," then, "a very dangerous ascent," and finally, "a pleasant excursion." So it was with each fresh headland which seemed to bar the way down the African coast. And the travellers who came last, in each case, found it next to impossible to imagine what were the difficulties and dangers that had seemed so formidable to their predecessors.

For a long time Cape Bojador, which is situate seventy leagues to the south of Cape Nam, was the extreme limit of discovery. This cape was formidable in itself, being terminated by a ridge of rocks, with fierce currents running round them; but was much more formidable from the fancies which the mariners had formed of the sea and land beyond it. "It is clear," they were wont to say, "that beyond this cape there are no people whatever; the land is as

bare as Libya—no water, no trees, no grass in it; the sea so shallow, that at a league from the land it is only a fathom deep; the currents so fierce, that the ship which passes that cape will never return;" and thus their theories were brought in to justify their fears.

This outstretcher (for such is the meaning of the word Bojador) was therefore as a bar drawn across that advance in maritime discovery, which had for so long a time been the first object of Prince Henry's life.

For twelve years the prince had been sending forth ships and men (*con poca aprovacion de muchos*) with little approbation from the public — the discovery of Madeira and Porto Santo serving to whet his appetite for further enterprise, but not winning the common voice in favour of his projects. The people at home, improving upon the reports of the sailors, said that "the land which the prince sought after was merely some sandy place like the deserts of Libya; that princes had possessed the empire of the world, and yet had not undertaken such designs as his, nor shown such anxiety to find new kingdoms; that the men who arrived in those foreign parts (if they did arrive) turned from white into black men; that the king, Don John, the prince's father, had endowed foreigners with land in his kingdom, to break it up and cultivate it—a thing very different from taking the people out of Portugal, which had need of them, to bring them amongst savages to be eaten, and to place them upon lands of which the mother country had no need; that the Author of the world had provided these islands solely for the habitation of wild beasts, of which an additional proof was that those rabbits which the discoverers

themselves had introduced were now dispossessing them of the island."

There is much here of the usual captiousness to be found in the criticism of bystanders upon action, mixed with a great deal of false assertion and assumed knowledge of the ways of Providence. Still, it were to be wished that most criticism upon action was as wise; for that part of the common talk which spoke of keeping their own population to bring out their own resources had a wisdom in it which the men of future centuries were yet to discover throughout the Peninsula.

Prince Henry, as may be seen by his perseverance up to this time, was not a man to have his purposes diverted by such criticism, much of which must have been, in his eyes, worthless and inconsequent in the extreme. Nevertheless, he had his own misgivings. His captains came back one after another, with no good tidings of discovery, but with petty plunder gained as they returned from incursions on the Moorish coast. The prince concealed from them his chagrin at the fruitless nature of their attempts, but probably did not feel it less on that account. He began to think, Was it for him to hope to discover that land which had been hidden from so many princes? Still he felt within himself the incitement of "a virtuous obstinacy," which would not let him rest. Would it not, he thought, be ingratitude to God, who thus moved his mind to these attempts, if he were to desist from his work, or be negligent in it? He resolved, therefore, to send out again Gil Eannes, one of his household, who had been sent the year before, but had returned, like the rest, having discovered nothing. He had been driven to the Canary Islands, and had seized upon some of the

natives there, whom he brought back. With this transaction the prince had shown himself dissatisfied; and Gil Eannes, now entrusted again with command, resolved to meet all dangers, rather than to disappoint the wishes of his master. Before his departure, the prince called him aside and said, "You cannot meet with such peril that the hope of your reward shall not be much greater; and, in truth, I wonder what imagination this is that you have all taken up—in a matter, too, of so little certainty; for if these things which are reported had any authority, however little, I would not blame you so much. But you quote to me the opinions of four mariners, who, as they were driven out of their way to Frandes or to some other ports to which they commonly navigated, had not, and could not have used, the needle and the chart: but do you go, however, and make your voyage without regard to their opinion, and, by the grace of God, you will not bring out of it anything but honour and profit."

We may well imagine that these stirring words of the prince must have confirmed Gil Eannes in his resolve to efface the stain of his former misadventure. And he succeeded in doing so; for he passed the dreaded Cape Bojador—a great event in the history of African discovery, and one that in that day was considered equal to a labour of Hercules. Gil Eannes returned to a grateful and most delighted master. He informed the prince that he had landed, and that the soil appeared to him unworked and fruitful; and, like a prudent man, he could not only tell of foreign plants, but had brought some of them home with him in a barrel of the new-found earth, plants much like those which bear, in Portugal, the roses of Santa Maria. The prince rejoiced to see

them, and gave thanks to God, "as if they had been the fruit and sign of the promised land; and besought our Lady, whose name the plants bore, that she would guide and set forth the doings in this discovery to the praise and glory of God, and to the increase of His holy faith."

The old world had now obtained a glimpse beyond Cape Bojador. The fearful "outstretcher" had no longer much interest for them, being a thing that was overcome, and which was to descend from an impossibility to a landmark, from which, by degrees, they would almost silently steal down the coast, counting their miles by thousands, until Vasco da Gama should boldly carry them round to India. But now came stormy times for the Portuguese kingdom, and the troubles of the regency occupied the prince's attention to the exclusion of cosmography.

In 1441, however, there was a voyage which led to very important consequences. In that year Antonio Gonçalvez, master of the robes to Prince Henry, was sent out with a vessel to load it with skins of "sea-wolves," a number of them having been seen, during a former voyage, at the mouth of a river about a hundred and fifty miles beyond Cape Bojador. Gonçalvez resolved to signalise his voyage by a feat that should gratify his master more than the capture of sea-wolves; and he accordingly planned and executed successfully an expedition for seizing some Azeneghi Moors, in order, as he told his companions, to take home "some of the language of that country." Tristam, another of Prince Henry's captains, afterwards falling in with Gonçalvez, a further capture of Moors was made, and Gonçalvez returned to Portugal with the spoil. This voyage

seems to have prompted the application which Prince Henry made, in the same year, to Pope Martin the Fifth, praying that his holiness would grant to the Portuguese crown all that should be conquered, from Cape Bojador to the Indies, together with plenary indulgence for those who should die while engaged in such conquests. The pope granted these requests; though afterwards, as we shall see, the Spanish discoveries of Columbus and his successors rendered it necessary that the terms of the grant should be modified. "And now," says a Portuguese historian, "with this apostolic grace, with the breath of royal favour, and already with the applause of the people, the prince pursued his purpose with more courage, and with greater outlay."

In 1442, the Moors whom Antonio Gonçalvez had taken the previous year promised to give black slaves in ransom for themselves if he would take them back to their own country; and the prince, approving of this, ordered Gonçalvez to set sail immediately, "insisting as the foundation of the matter, that if Gonçalvez should not be able to obtain so many negroes (as had been mentioned) in exchange for the three Moors, yet that he should take them; for whatever number he should get, he would gain souls, because they (the negroes) might be converted to the faith, which could not be managed with the Moors." Here again we see the religious motives predominating: and, indeed, we may note the same motive in numerous passages in which this prince's conduct comes before us.

Gonçalvez obtained ten black slaves, some gold dust, a target of buffalo hide, and some ostriches' eggs, in exchange for two of the Moors, and, returning with his cargo, excited general admiration on

account of the colour of the slaves. We may presume that these are the first black slaves that made their appearance in the Peninsula since the extinction of the old slavery, though there are reasons for alleging that negroes had before this era been seized and carried to Seville. The *Ecclesiastical Annals* of that city, under the date 1474, record that negro slaves abounded in that city, and that the fifths levied on them produced considerable gains to the royal revenue; it is also mentioned that there had been traffic of this kind in the days of Don Enrique the Third, about 1399, but that it had since then fallen into the hands of the Portuguese. The chronicler states that the negroes of Seville were treated very kindly from the time of King Enrique, being allowed to keep their dances and festivals; and that one of them was named "mayoral" of the rest, who protected them against their masters, and before the courts of law, and also settled their own private quarrels. There is a letter from Ferdinand and Isabella in the year 1474, to a celebrated negro, Juan de Valladolid, commonly called the "Negro Count" (*el Conde Negro*), nominating him to this office of "mayoral of the negroes," which runs thus—

"For the many good, loyal, and signal services which you have done us, and do each day, and because we know your sufficiency, ability, and good disposition, we constitute you mayoral and judge of all the negroes and mulattoes, free, or slaves, which are in the very loyal and noble city of Seville, and throughout the whole Archbishopric thereof, and that the said negroes and mulattoes may not hold any festivals, nor pleadings amongst themselves, except before you Juan de Valladolid, negro, our judge and mayoral of the said negroes and mulattoes;

and we command that you, and you only, should take cognisance of the disputes, pleadings, marriages and other things which may take place amongst them, forasmuch as you are a person sufficient for that office, and deserving of your power, and you know the laws and ordinances which ought to be kept, and we are informed that you are of noble lineage amongst the said negroes."

But the above merely shows that in the year 1474 there were many negroes in Seville, and that laws and ordinances had been made about them. These negroes might all, however, have been imported into Seville since the Portuguese discoveries. True it is that in the times of Don Enrique the Third and during Béthencourt's occupation of the Canary Islands, slaves from thence had been brought to France and Spain: but these islanders were not negroes, and it certainly may be doubted whether any negroes were imported into Seville previous to 1443.

Returning to Portuguese affairs, the historian Faria y Sousa tells us that the gold obtained by Gonçalvez "awakened, as always, covetousness." The next year Nuño Tristan went further down the African coast, and off the island of Adeget, one of the Arguim Islands, captured eighty natives, and brought them to Portugal. These, however, were not negroes, but Azenegues.

The tide of popular opinion was now not merely turned, but in full flow in favour of Prince Henry and his discoveries. The discoverers are found to come back rich in slaves and other commodities; whereas it is remembered that in former wars and undertakings, those who had been engaged came back in great distress. Strangers, too, came from

afar scenting the prey. A new mode of life, as the Portuguese said, had been found out for them; and we are told that "the greater part of the kingdom was moved with a sudden desire to follow this way to Guinea."

In 1444, a company was formed at Lagos, which received permission from the prince to go upon these discoveries, paying him a certain portion of the proceeds. This has been considered as a company founded for carrying on the slave trade, but I do not think that we have evidence to show that its founders meant this to be its purpose. It might rather be compared to an expedition sent out, as we should say in modern times, with letters of marque, in which, however, the prizes chiefly hoped for are not ships or merchandise, but men. After getting some ostriches' eggs, the first thing the expedition did was to attack the inhabitants of the islands Nar and Tider, and to bring back about two hundred slaves. I grieve to say that we do not find our great discovering prince putting a check to any of these doings, but, on the contrary, he rewarded with large honours Lançarote, one of the principal men of this expedition, and received his own fifth of the slaves. Yet I have scarcely a doubt that the words of the historian are substantially true—that discovery, not gain, was still the prince's leading idea. We have an account from an eye-witness of the partition of the slaves brought back by Lançarote, which, as it is the first transaction of the kind on record, is worthy of notice, more especially as it may enable us to understand the motives of the prince, and of other men of those times. It is to be found in the Chronicles of Azurara. The good chronicler is torn to the heart at the sorrow he witnesses, but still

believes it to be for good; and that he must not let his mere earthly commiseration get the better of his piety.

"O thou heavenly Father," he exclaims, "who, with thy powerful hand, without movement of thy divine essence, governest all the infinite company of thy holy city, and who drawest together all the axles of the upper worlds, divided into nine spheres, moving the times of their long and short periods as it pleases thee! I implore thee that my tears may not condemn my conscience, for not its law, but our common humanity constrains my humanity to lament piteously the sufferings of these people (slaves). And if the brute animals, with their mere bestial sentiments, by a natural instinct, recognise the misfortunes of their like, what must this my human nature do, seeing thus before my eyes this wretched company, remembering that I myself am of the generation of the sons of Adam! The other day, which was the eighth of August, very early in the morning, by reason of the heat, the mariners began to bring-to their vessels, and, as they had been commanded, to draw forth those captives to take them out of the vessel: whom, placed together on that plain, it was a marvellous sight to behold, for amongst them there were some of a reasonable degree of whiteness, handsome and well-made; others less white, resembling leopards in their colour; others as black as Ethiopians, and so ill-formed, as well in their faces as their bodies, that it seemed to the beholders as if they saw the forms of a lower hemisphere. But what heart was that, how hard soever, which was not pierced with sorrow seeing that company: for some had sunken cheeks, and their faces bathed in tears, looking at each other; others were groaning very dolorously, looking at the heights of the heavens,

fixing their eyes upon them, crying out loudly, as if they were asking succour from the Father of nature; others struck their faces with their hands, throwing themselves on the earth; others made their lamentations in songs, according to the customs of their country, which, although we could not understand their language, we saw corresponded well to the height of their sorrow. But now, for the increase of their grief, came those who had the charge of the distribution, and they began to put them apart one from the other, in order to equalise the portions; wherefore it was necessary to part children and parents, husbands and wives, and brethren from each other. Neither in the partition of friends and relations was any law kept, only each fell where the lot took him. O powerful fortune! who goest hither and thither with thy wheels, compassing the things of the world as it pleaseth thee, if thou canst, place before the eyes of this miserable nation some knowledge of the things that are to come after them (*cousas postumeiras*), that they may receive some consolation in the midst of their great sadness! and you others who have the business of this partition, look with pity on such great misery, and consider how can those be parted whom you cannot disunite! Who will be able to make this partition without great difficulty? for while they were placing in one part the children that saw their parents in another, they sprang up perseveringly and fled to them; the mothers enclosed their children in their arms and threw themselves with them on the ground, receiving wounds with little pity for their own flesh so that their children might not be torn from them! And so, with labour and difficulty, they concluded the partition, for, besides the trouble they had with

the captives, the plain was full of people, as well of the place as of the villages and neighbourhood around, who in that day gave rest to their hands, the mainstay of their livelihood, only to see this novelty. And as they looked upon these things, some deploring, some reasoning upon them, they made such a riotous noise, as greatly to disturb those who had the management of this distribution. The Infante was there upon a powerful horse, accompanied by his people, looking out his share, but as a man who for his part did not care for gain, for, of the forty-six souls which fell to his fifth, he speedily made his choice, as all his principal riches were in his contentment, considering with great delight the salvation of those souls which before were lost. And certainly his thought was not vain, for as soon as they had knowledge of our language, they readily became Christians; and I, who have made this history in this volume, have seen in the town of Lagos young men and young women, the sons and grandsons of those very captives, born in this land, as good and as true Christians as if they had lineally descended, since the commencement of the law of Christ, from those who were first baptised."

The good Azurara wished that these captives might have some foresight of the things to happen after their death: I do not think it would have proved much consolation to them to have foreseen that they were almost the first of many millions to be dealt with as they had been. For, in this year, 1444, Europe may be said to have made a distinct beginning in the slave trade, henceforth to spread on all sides, like the waves upon stirred water, and not, like them, to become fainter and fainter as the circles widen.

In 1445, an expedition was fitted out by the prince, and the command given to Gonsalvo de Cintra, who was unsuccessful in an attack on the natives near Cape Blanco. He and some other of the principal men of the expedition lost their lives. These were the first Portuguese who died in battle on that coast. In the same year, the prince sent out three other vessels. The captains received orders from the infante, Don Pedro, who was then Regent of Portugal, to enter the river d'Oro, and make all endeavours to convert the natives to the faith, and even, if they should not receive baptism, to make peace and alliance with them. This did not succeed. Very likely the captains found negotiation of this kind exceedingly tame and apparently profitless in comparison with the pleasant forays made by their predecessors. The attempt, however, shows much intelligence and humanity on the part of those in power in Portugal. That the instructions were sincere is proved by the fact of this expedition returning with only one negro, gained in ransom, and a Moor who came of his own accord to see the Christian country.

This same year, 1445, was signalised by a great event in the progress of discovery along the African coast. Dinis Dyaz, called by Barros and the historians who followed him, Dinis Fernandez, sought employment from the infante, and being entrusted by him with the command of a vessel, pushed boldly down the coast, and passed the river Sanaga (Senegal), which divides the Azenegues (whom the first discoverers always called Moors) from the negroes of Jalof. The inhabitants were much astonished at the presence of the Portuguese vessel on their coasts, and at first took it for a fish, or a bird, or a phan-

tasm; but when in their rude boats (hollowed logs) they neared it and saw that there were men in it, judiciously concluding that it was a more dangerous thing than fish, or bird, or phantasm, they fled. Fernandez, however, captured four of them off that coast, but as his object was not slave hunting but discovery, he went on till he discovered Cape Verde and then returned to his country, to be received with much honour and favour by Prince Henry. These four negroes taken by Fernandez were the first taken in their own country by the Portuguese. That the prince was still engaged in high thoughts of discovery and conversion, we may conclude from observing that he rewarded and honoured Fernandez as much as if he had brought him large booty.

In this case, too, as in others, we should do the prince great injustice if we supposed that he had any slave-dealer's pleasure in getting these negroes; as it is far more probable that he valued them as persons capable of furnishing intelligence, and, perhaps, of becoming interpreters, for his future expeditions. Not that, without these especial motives, he would have thought it anything but great gain for a man to be made a slave, if it were the means of bringing him into communion with the church.

After this, several expeditions, which did not lead to much, occupied the prince's time till 1447. In that year, a fleet, large for those times, of fourteen vessels, was fitted out at Lagos by the people there, and the command given by Prince Henry to Lançarote. The object seems to have been, from a speech that we have of Lançarote's, to make war upon the Azeneghi Moors, and especially to take revenge for the defeat which Gonsalvo de Cintra suffered in 1445, near Cape Blanco. That purpose

effected, the ships parted company. Lançarote went southwards, extending the discovery of the coast to the river Gambia. In the course of his proceedings on that coast, we find again that Prince Henry's instructions insisted much upon the maintenance of peace with the natives. Another instance of the same disposition on his part deserves to be especially recorded. The expedition had been received in a friendly manner at Gomera, one of the Canary Islands. Notwithstanding this kind reception, Juan de Castilla took some of the natives prisoners. On their coming to Portugal, Prince Henry had them clothed and placed at liberty in the place from which they had been taken.

This expedition under Lançarote had no great result. They went a little further down the coast than they had ever been before, but they got into feuds with the natives, and were preparing to attack them, when a storm dissipated their fleet and made them return home.

It appears, I think, from the general course of proceedings of the Portuguese in those times, that they considered there was always war between them and the Azeneghi Moors, that is, in the territory from Ceuta as far as the Senegal River; but that they had no declared hostility against the negroes of Jalof or beyond, though skirmishes of course would be sure to happen from ill-understood attempts of friendship on the one side, and just or needless fears on the other.

The last public enterprise of which Prince Henry had the direction was worthy to close his administration of the affairs relating to Portuguese discovery. He caused two ambassadors to be despatched to the king of the Cape Verde territory, to treat of peace,

and to introduce the Christian faith. One of the ambassadors, a Danish gentleman, was treacherously killed by the natives, and upon that the other returned, having accomplished nothing.

Don Alfonso the Fifth, the nephew of Prince Henry, now took the reins of government, and the future expeditions along the coast of Africa proceeded in his name. Still it does not appear that Prince Henry ceased to have power and influence in the management of African affairs; and we read that the first thing that the king did in them was, to enact that no one should pass Cape Bojador without a licence from Prince Henry. Some time between 1448 and 1454, a fortress was built in one of the islands of Arguim, which islands had already become a place of bargain for gold and negro slaves. And this was the first Portuguese establishment on the coast of Africa. It seems, according to Barros, that a system of trade was now established between the Portuguese and the negroes.

Having come to an important point in the course of Portuguese discovery we may now make a pause, not without some satisfaction at having got through the most tedious, though not the most uninteresting, part of the narrative—a part chiefly marked by names, dates, and bare events, which stand in the undiversified story like solitary post-houses in the "Steppes" of Russia or the "Landes" in France.

Admitting, however, to the full any tediousness that there may be in this account of early Portuguese discovery, we ought not, I think, to consider it uninteresting. The beginnings of great things—even if obscure, trivial, isolated; without the details which bring reality into presence; and round which the hopes and the fortunes of men have not yet

gathered—still cannot be devoid of interest to any thoughtful, forecasting mind. The traveller willingly dismounts to see the streamlet which is the origin of a great river: and the man of imagination (who is patient in research because he is imaginative), as, in science, he laboriously follows with delight the tracks now hardened in the sandstone of obscure birds which paddled over those buried plains ages ago, so, in history, he will often find material to meditate upon, and to observe, in slight notices which, however, like the others, indicate much to him of bygone times and wondrous changes.

CHAPTER II

CA DA MOSTO'S VOYAGE—PRINCE HENRY'S DEATH AND CHARACTER—FURTHER PORTUGUESE DISCOVERIES

THE narrative of these Portuguese voyages along the African coast is, for the most part, rather uninviting. Could we recall, however, the voyagers themselves, and listen to their story, we should find it animating enough. Each enterprise, as we have it now, with its bare statistics, seems a meagre affair; but it was far otherwise to the men who were concerned in it. Of the motives[1] impelling men to engage in such expeditions, something has already been said. But besides the hopes and fears of each individual of the crew, the conjoint enterprise had in it a life to be lived, and a career to be worked out. It started to do something; fulfilled its purpose, or at least some purpose; and then came back, radiant with success—from that time forward to be a great fact in history. Or, on the other hand, there was some small failure or mischance, perhaps early in the voyage; the sailors then began to reckon up ill

[1] "They err who regard the conquistadores as led only by a thirst for gold, or even exclusively by religious fanaticism. Dangers always exalt the poetry of life, and moreover, the powerful age which we here seek to depict in regard to its influence on the development of cosmical ideas, gave to all enterprises, as well as to the impressions of nature offered by distant voyages, the charm of novelty and surprise, which begins to be wanting to our present more learned age in the many regions of the earth which are now open to us."—Humboldt's *Kosmos*. Sabine's translation, 1848, vol. ii. p. 272.

omens, and to say that little good would come of this business. Further on, some serious misadventure happened which made them turn, or from the mere lapse of time they were obliged to bethink themselves of getting back. Safety, not renown or profit, now became their object; and then hope was at last but the negative of some fear. Thereupon, no doubt, ensued a good deal of recrimination amongst themselves, for very few people are magnanimous enough to share ill-success kindly together. Then, in the long dull evenings of their voyage homewards, as they sat looking on the waters, they thought what excuses and explanations they would make to their friends at home, and how shame and vexation would mingle with their joy at returning.

This transaction, teeming, as it did, with anxious life, makes but a poor show in some chronicle—they sailed, and did something, or failed in doing, and then came back, and this was in such a year—brief records, like the entry in an almanack, or the few emphatic words on a tombstone.

At the period, however, we are now entering upon, the annals of maritime discovery are fortunately enriched by the account of a voyager who could tell more of the details of what he saw than we have hitherto heard from other voyagers, and who was himself his own chronicler.

In 1454, Ca da Mosto, a young Venetian, who had already gained some experience in voyaging, happened to be on board a Venetian galley that was detained by contrary winds at Cape St. Vincent. Prince Henry was then living close to the Cape. He sent his secretary and the Venetian consul on board the galley. They told of the great things the prince had done, showed samples of the commodities that

came from the lands discovered by him (Madeira sugars, dragon's blood, and other articles), and spoke of the gains made by Portuguese voyagers being as great as 700 or 1000 per cent. Ca da Mosto expressed his wish to be employed, was informed of the terms that would be granted, and heard that a Venetian would be well received by the prince, "because he was of opinion, that spices and other rich merchandise might be found in those parts, and knew that the Venetians understood these commodities better than any other nation."

In fine, Ca da Mosto saw the prince, and was evidently much impressed by his noble bearing. He obtained his wishes, and being furnished with a caravel, he embarked his merchandise in it, and set off on a voyage of discovery. We have now, for the first time, an intelligent man on board one of these vessels, giving us his own account of the voyage.

From Ca da Mosto the reader at once learns the state of things with regard to the slave-trade. The Portuguese factory at Arguim was the head-quarters of the trade. Thither came all kinds of merchandise; and gold and slaves were taken back in return. The "Arabs" of that district (Moors, the Portuguese would have called them) were the middle men in this affair. They took their Barbary horses to the negro country, and "there bartered with the great men for slaves," getting from ten to eighteen slaves for each horse. They also brought silks of Granada and Tunis, and silver, in exchange for which they received slaves and gold. These Arabs, or Moors, had a place of trade of their own, called Hoden, behind Cape Blanco. There the slaves were brought, "from whence," Ca da Mosto says, "they are sent

to the mountains of Barka, and from thence to Sicily; part of them are also brought to Tunis, and along the coast of Barbary, and the rest to Argin, and sold to the licensed Portuguese. Every year between seven and eight hundred slaves are sent from Argin to Portugal."

"Before this trade was settled," says Ca da Mosto, "the Portuguese used to seize upon the Moors themselves (as appears occasionally from the evidence that has before been referred to), and also the Azenegues, who live further towards the south; but now peace is restored to all, and the Infante suffers no further damage to be done to these people. He is in hopes, that by conversing with Christians, they may easily be brought over to the Romish faith, as they are not, as yet, well established in that of Mohammed, of which they know nothing but by hearsay."

No doubt the prince's good intentions were greatly furthered by the convenience of this mode of trading. In short, gain made for itself its usual convenient channels to work in, and saved itself as much as it could the trouble of discovery, or of marauding. Ca da Mosto being, as was said before, the first modern European visiting Africa who himself gives an account of it, and being, moreover, an honest and intelligent man, possessing the rare combination of keen observation and clear narrative power, all that he writes is most valuable. He notices the differences, both as regards the people and the country, to be found on the opposite sides of the Senegal River. On the northern side he finds the men small, spare, and tawny, the country arid and barren; on the southern side, the men "exceeding black, tall, corpulent, and well made; the country green, and

full of green trees." This latter is the country of Jalof, the same that Prince Henry first heard of in his intercourse with the Moors. Both men and women, Ca da Mosto says, wash themselves four or five times a day, being very cleanly as to their persons, but not so in eating, in which they observe no rule. They are full of words, and never have done talking; and are, for the most part, liars and cheats. Yet, on the other hand, they are very charitable; for they give a dinner or a night's lodging and a supper, to all strangers who come to their houses, without expecting any return. He goes on to say—

"These negro lords often make war among themselves, and with their neighbours. They have no cavalry for want of horses: they wear no arms save a large target for their defence, made of the skin of a beast, called Danta, which is very difficult to be pierced; and Azagays, or light darts, in throwing of which they are very dexterous. These darts are pointed with iron, the length of a span, barbed in different manners; so that they make dangerous wounds in the body wherever they enter, tearing the flesh grievously when pulled out. They also have a Moorish weapon, which is like a Turkish half-sword; that is, bent like a bow, and made of iron (without any steel) brought from the kingdom of Gambia by the negroes, who thereof make their arms; and if they have any iron in their own country, they know nothing of it, or want industry to work it. They use also another weapon, like our javelin; besides which, they have no other arms.

"As they have but few arms, their wars are very bloody, for their strokes do not fall in vain. They are extremely bold and fierce, choosing rather to be killed, than to save their lives by flight. They are not

afraid to die, nor scared, as other people are, when they see a companion slain. They have no ships, neither did they ever see any before the Portuguese came upon their coast. Those inhabiting near the river, and some who live by the sea, have Zappolies, or Almadias, made out of a single piece of wood, the largest whereof carries three or four men. In these they fish sometimes, and go up and down the river. These negroes are the greatest swimmers in the world, by the experiments the author has seen of them in these parts."

Leaving the country of the Jalofs, Ca da Mosto proceeded eight hundred miles further, as he says, but he must, I think, have over-estimated his reckoning, to the country of King Budomel. Budomel received him courteously, and made purchases of him, which were paid for in slaves. Ca da Mosto gives an account of the religion in Budomel's country, which deserves notice—

"Towards evening, he ordered the Azanaghi or Arabs, whom he always has about him, to say prayers. His manner was thus: Being entered into the mosque (which was in one of the courts) with some of the principal negroes, he first stood with his eyes lifted up, then he advanced two steps, and spoke a few words softly; after which, he stretched himself on the ground and kissed it. The Azanaghi, and all the rest, did the same. Then rising, he repeated the same acts over again, ten or twelve times, which took up half an hour. When he had done, he asked the author's opinion of their manner of worship; and to give him some account of his own religion. Hereupon Ca da Mosto told him, in presence of his doctors, that the religion of Mohammed was false; and the Romish, the true one. This made

the Arabs mad, and Budomel laugh; who, on this occasion, said, that he looked upon the religion of the Europeans to be good: for that none but God could have given them so much riches and understanding. He added, however, that the Mohammedan Law must be also good; and that he believed the negroes were more sure of salvation than the Christians, because God was a just Lord; and therefore, as he had given the latter Paradise in this world, it ought to be possessed in the world to come by the negroes, who had scarce anything here, in comparison of the others. In all his discourse he showed a good understanding, and took great pleasure in hearing the customs of the Christians. Ca da Mosto believed he might easily have been converted, were it not for fear of losing his estate; for his nephew, in whose house he lodged, often told him so, and took great delight himself in hearing the author talk of his religion."

Perhaps there is hardly anything which tells more of the state of a people than their markets. We will, accordingly, give Ca da Mosto's account of them—

"As the author was several days on shore, he went three or four times to see one of their markets or fairs, which was kept on Mondays and Fridays in a meadow, not far from the place where he was lodged. Hither repaired, with their wares, both men and women, for four or five miles about; and those who lived at a greater distance, went to other markets nearer them. The great poverty of this people appeared in the goods found in these fairs; which were, a few pieces of cotton-cloth, cotton-yarn, pulse, oil, millet, wooden tubs, palm-mats, and everything else for the use of life. Here also one meets with arms, and small quantities of gold. As they have

no money or coin of any kind, all trade is carried on by way of barter; exchanging one thing for another, according to the different values. These blacks, both men and women, came to gaze on Ca da Mosto, as if he had been a prodigy; and thought it a great curiosity to behold a white man, for they had never seen any before. They were as much astonished at his dress as his colour; being clothed after the Spanish fashion, with a black damask waistcoat, and a cloak over it. They admired the woollen cloth, of which they have none; and seemed much surprised at the sight of the waistcoat. Some catching him by the arms and hands, which they rubbed with spittle, to see if the whiteness was natural or artificial; and finding that his skin was not painted, their wonder continued. The end of his going to these markets was chiefly to see what quantity of gold was brought thither." [1]

From Budomel's country, the voyagers, sailing southwards, came to the river Gambra (now called Gambia), which they entered, but they failed in conciliating the inhabitants. A contest ensued which deserves to be recorded as an instance of almost unparalleled valour, considering that the arms used by the Europeans were totally unknown to their opponents.

"The Almadias came under the prow of Ca da Mosto's ship, which was foremost; and, dividing themselves into two divisions, took him in their centre. This gave him an opportunity to tell their number, which was fifteen and as large as barques. They ceased to row, raised their oars, and looked upon the caravel with wonder. There were between an hundred and thirty and an hundred and fifty negroes, all well made, of a good size and very black.

[1] *Astley's Voyages*, vol. i. p. 587.

They wore white cotton shirts on their bodies, and white caps on their heads, like the Germans, but with a wing on each side, and a feather in the middle, by which they distinguished themselves to be soldiers of war. At the prow of each Almadia there stood a negro with a round target, which seemed to be of leather, on his arm; yet they neither attacked the caravel, nor she them.

"Thus they continued peaceably till they saw the other two ships bear down on them. Then they prepared, dropped their oars, and without any further ceremony shot their arrows at them. The ships, seeing the attack made upon them, discharged four pieces of cannon at the enemy: the report whereof so stupefied them that they threw down their bows; and, looking some time one way, and some time another, remained surprised to see the stones, shot by the cannon, fall in the water near them. They continued in this suspense for a considerable while: but, seeing the cannon fired no more at them, plucked up courage, and, laying hold of their bows, renewed the fight with great fury, approaching within a stone's throw of the ships. Hereupon the sailors began to discharge their cross-bows at them. The first shot was made by the bastard son of the Genoese gentleman, which, hitting a negro in the breast, he immediately dropped down dead. Those in the Almadia took up the dart and gazed at it with wonder, but did not give over the attack, which they carried on vigorously, and were as courageously opposed by the caravels; insomuch that in a little time many of them were killed, without the loss of one European. The negroes observing the disadvantage they laboured under, all the Almadias agreed to attack the little caravel in stern, which was both ill manned

and ill armed. They executed this design with great fury: which Ca da Mosto observing, he moved forward to her assistance; and getting her between the two large caravels, they all discharged their cannon and cross-bows at the Almadias, which made them retire. After this, they linked the three caravels together, and dropped an anchor that held them all, as it was calm." [1]

During their stay in the river Gambia, Ca da Mosto and his companions saw the constellation of the Southern Cross for the first time. Finding that the people would have nothing to do with them, for they believed that the Christians were very bad people, and bought negroes to eat them, Ca da Mosto and the commanders wished to proceed a hundred miles further up the river; but the common sailors would not hear of it, and the expedition forthwith returned to Portugal.

In 1456, Ca da Mosto made another voyage, in the course of which he discovered the Cape de Verde Islands. Leaving them, he went again to the Gambia River, which he appears to have ascended much further than during his previous expedition, and he also succeeded in conciliating the natives. The voyagers then entered what they called the "Lord Battimansa's" territory, and sought to make a treaty with him. It is curious to see the nature of the commodities dealt in.

"As soon as the messengers had declared their commission, Battimansa immediately ordered certain negroes to the caravel; with whom they not only entered into a treaty of friendship, but also bartered several things for negro slaves, and some gold: though nothing in comparison from what they ex-

[1] *Astley's Voyages*, vol. i. p. 590.

pected from the account given by those of Senega; who, as they are very poor, look upon that as a large quantity which our adventurers considered but very trifling. They value their gold as a very precious thing, and at a greater rate than the Portuguese did; yet, for all that, the latter had it very reasonably, since they gave them for it things of very little value. They continued here eleven days; during which time the caravels were resorted to by numbers of negroes, from each side of the river, who came to see novelties, and sell their goods; among which were a few gold rings.

" They traded with cotton and cotton-yarn. Some pieces were all white; others striped with blue and white; and a third sort, with red, blue and white stripes, very well wrought. They likewise brought civet, and civet-cat skins, monkeys, large and small baboons of various sorts: which, being very plenty, they sold them cheap, that is, for something not exceeding ten marquets a head; and the ounce of civet, for what was not worth more than forty or fifty: not that they sold the things by weight; but the author judged it to be about that quantity."

Leaving the river Gambia, Ca da Mosto and his company went down the coast, discovered Cape Roxo, and afterwards sailed up the river Grande; but for want of any knowledge of the language of the people, were forced to return to Portugal.

Some time between 1460 and 1464, an expedition went out under Pedro de Cintra, one of the King of Portugal's gentlemen, to make further discoveries along the African coast. These voyagers, whose story is briefly told by Ca da Mosto, discovered Sierra Leone (so called on account of the roaring thunder heard there), and went a little beyond Cape

Mesurado. The precise date of this voyage is uncertain, but we may fairly consider Sierra Leone as being the point attained at, or about, the death of Prince Henry in 1463, of whose character, before parting with him, something deserves to be said.

This great leader of maritime discovery resembled Columbus strongly in one thing, namely, his unity of purpose. He resembled him, too, in his patience and in his unvarying confidence of success, even under disappointment. "He was bold and valorous in war, versed in arts and letters; a skilful fencer; in the mathematics superior to all men of his time; generous in the extreme; most zealous for the increase of the faith. No bad habit was known in him. His memory was equal to the authority he bore, and his prudence equal to his memory."[1] And to this character the chronicler, Azurara, who evidently knew the prince well, and speaks with perfect honesty about him, adds two or three of those little niceties of description which give life and reality to the picture. He says that the prince was a man of great counsel and authority, wise and of good memory, but in some things slow, whether it was through the prevalence of the phlegmatic temperament in his constitution, or from intentional deliberation, being moved to some end which men did not perceive.

It was this temperament, probably, that made the prince incapable of "ill-will against any person, however great the injury he had received from him," so that this placidity of disposition seemed an actual fault in him. He was accordingly thought "deficient in distributive justice." There are instances in his conduct which bear out this, and one especially, in

[1] Faria y Sousa.

which he is stated to have overlooked the desertion of his banner, on an occasion of great peril to himself, and afterwards to have unjustly favoured the persons who had thus been found wanting in courage. This, no doubt, was an error on his part, but at least it was an heroic one, such as belonged to the first Cæsar; and in the estimation of the prince's followers, it probably added to their liking for the man what little it may have taken away from their confidence in the precision of his justice as a commander.

We learn, from the same authority, that his house was the resort of all the good men of the kingdom, and of foreigners, and that he was a man of intense labour and study. "Often the sun found him in the same place where it had left him the day before, he having watched throughout the whole arc of the night without any rest."

Altogether, whether we consider this prince's motives, his objects, his deeds, or his mode of life, we must acknowledge him to be one of the most notable men, not merely of his own country and period, but of modern times and of all nations, and one upon whose shoulders might worthily rest the arduous beginnings of continuous maritime discovery. Would that such men remained to govern the lands they have the courageous foresight to discover! Then, indeed, they might take to themselves the motto *talant de bien faire*, which this prince, their great leader, caused to be inscribed by his captains in many a land, that as yet, at least, has not found much good from its introduction, under his auspices, to the civilisation of an older world.

We next note that, six years after Prince Henry's death, King Alfonso adopted a new system, and farmed out the commerce with the coast of Africa

to Fernando Gomez for five years at one thousand ducats a year, upon certain conditions, one of which was that he should advance the discovery along the coast, beginning from Sierra Leone, three hundred miles in the course of each of the five years. Fernando Gomez, by his captains Juan de Santarem and Pedro de Escobar, discovered the Gold Coast, which they called Oro de la Mina, and gained great riches which he expended in aid of the king's expeditions against the Moors. Fernando Po discovered the island of Formosa, now called by the name of the discoverer. The last discovery in the life of King Alfonso was that of Cape Catharina.

Don Juan the Second succeeded to his father Don Alfonso. This king was very earnest in African discovery. He resolved that a fort should be built at La Mina; and for this purpose sent an expedition under Diego de Azambuja with six hundred men (five hundred soldiers and one hundred artisans), and the fort already made in separate pieces, as we now send out palaces for native chiefs, or lighthouses, to distant parts. The account of the proceedings of this expedition is interesting. On the arrival of the ships at La Mina, Azambuja jumped on shore to take possession, fixed the Portuguese flag upon a tree, raised an altar at the foot of the tree, and caused mass to be said, the first ever said in those parts. The Portuguese commander then prepared to receive the negro king with due pomp. The king arrived, surrounded by a large company of his subjects well armed. Their helmets, however, made of skins, were such as to provoke " more mirth than terror." Their king's arms and legs were covered with ornaments of gold. On his neck was a chain with bells suspended to it, like that of the first mule in a set. Before him

went the band, with numerous and various instruments, producing "more noise than harmony" (the instruments were timbrels, horns, and bells). The negro king arrived himself, "serene and severe," and the Portuguese captain came forward to meet him, "magnificent in dress and grave in aspect." The king took the hand of the other in sign of peace, and the ceremonious part of the matter being ended, Azambuja made known the proposition he had brought from his master (here we must take the very words of the historian), "which was to make the negro king understand first the way of the Catholic rites, and then to hide from him the way of our covetousness, asking leave to make a house in which our people could live; and force was to be used to compel them, if it should be necessary." "I do not," says the candid historian, "imagine that I shall persuade the world that our intent was only to be preachers; but on the other hand the world must not fancy that our intent was merely to be traders."

The Portuguese captain was listened to with "marvellous silence," and the proposition touching the Christian faith well received: the other about building a fort was listened to very coldly. The negro king was not so dull as to be without an unpleasant foresight of what this fort-building might come to. However, the Portuguese captain pressed the point, and the negro king gave it up, and took himself away. The Portuguese artisans began forthwith to work, but unfortunately commenced upon a rock that was held sacred, upon which the negroes rushed upon them. Azambuja diverted this danger by an instant distribution of presents, which soothed the negroes completely, thus verifying the proverb,

says the historian, that " gifts break through rocks." The castle was built, and called the Fort of St. George. Azambuja being made lieutenant, ruled for three years, and came out of his employment with applause, " a difficult thing to attain amongst the Portuguese." The writer might have added amongst all people; for second-hand authority has within it the elements of decay and disapprobation, meeting with that criticism and supervision when alive which in the case of other authority is often postponed until after its death.

The King of Portugal about this time took the title of " Lord of Guinea," and desired his captains to leave more formal notice of their discoveries at the place of discovery: to set up stones, declaring " the king, the captain, and the time; by whose order, by whom, and when " the discovery was made. The first captain sent out after this order was Diego Cam; and Martin Behaim, the great astronomer and geographer, is said to have accompanied him. They discovered the kingdom of Congo: and, at the request of the King of Congo, took back some of the sons of the principal men to be baptised, and to learn the Christian faith. Diego Cam was also bearer of a request that priests should be sent to Congo. The King of Benin, a territory between the Gold Coast and Congo, made at this time a similar request, by an ambassador sent to the King of Portugal. This ambassador, while at Lisbon, happened to speak about a greater power in Africa than his master, to whom, indeed, his master is the vassal, which instantly set the Portuguese king thinking about Prester John—the search after whom is in the history of discovery what alchemy was to chemistry. The king concluded that this greater power must be Prester John.

Bartholomew Diaz and two other captains were accordingly sent out on further discovery. They did not find Prester John, but got as far as a cape which from experience they called Cape Stormy, but which their master, seeing in its discovery an omen of better things, renamed as the Cape of Good Hope.

It is a fact of great historical interest, and a singular link between African and American discovery, that Bartholomew Columbus, brother of Christopher, was engaged in this voyage. The authority for this important statement is Las Casas,[1] who says that he found, in a book belonging to Christopher Columbus, being one of the works of Cardinal Aliaco, a note " in Bartholomew Colon's handwriting " (which he knew well, having several of the letters and papers concerning the expedition in his own possession), which note gives a short account, in bad Latin, of the voyage, mentions the degree of latitude of the Cape, and concludes with the words *in quibus omnibus interfui.*

In fiction, too, this voyage of Bartholomew Diaz was very notable, as it presented an occasion for the writing of one of the most celebrated passages in modern poetry, a passage not easily to be surpassed for its majesty and tenderness, and for a beauty which even those tiresome allusions to the classics, that give a faded air to so much of the poetry of the sixteenth century, cannot seriously disfigure nor obscure.

It is to be found in the " Lusiadas " of Camöens, and indicates the culminating point of Portuguese discovery in Africa, as celebrated by the national poet.

Just as the mariners approach the Cape, a cloud rises, darkens the air, and then discloses a monstrous

[1] See Notes.

giant, with deep-set, caverned eyes, of rugged countenance, and pallid earthy colour, vast as that statue of Apollo, the colossal wonder of the world. In solemn language, this awful shape pours forth disastrous prophecies, and threatens his highest vengeance on those who have discovered him — maledictions which, alas! may be securely uttered against those who accomplish aught that is bolder than has hitherto been attempted by their fellow-men.

When vexed by the question "Who art thou?" the "stupendous body" harshly and mournfully replies, that he is that great stormy Cape, hitherto hidden from mankind, whom their boldness in discovering much offends.

He then relates the touching story of his love: how he was Adamastor, of the race of Titans, and how he loved Thetis, the fairest being of the sea; and how, deceived by the (magic) arts of her "who was the life of his body," he found himself caressing a rough and horrid crag instead of her sweet, soft countenance; and how, crazed by grief and by dishonour, he wandered forth to seek another world, where no one should behold him and mock his misery; how still the vengeance of the gods pursued him; and how he felt his flesh gradually turning into rock, and his members extending themselves among the long waves; and how, for ever to increase his agony, the beautiful Thetis still encircled him.

Having told his grief, he made himself into a dark cloud (*Desfez-se a nuvem negra*), and the sea roared far off with a sonorous sound. And then the Portuguese mariner lifted up his hands in prayer to the sacred chorus of angels, who had guided the vessel so long on its way, and prayed God to remove the

fulfilment of the evil things which Adamastor had prophesied against his nation.

The Genius of the Stormy Cape might have taken up a direr song of prophecy against the inhabitants of the unfortunate land of which he formed so conspicuous and mournful a prominence.

Maritime discovery had now, by slow and painful degrees, proceeded down the coast of Africa, nearly to the southernmost point, and from thence would soon be curving round in due course to India. But expeditions by sea were not the only modes of discovery undertaken by the Portuguese in the reign of John the Second of Portugal. Pedro de Covilham and Alfonso de Paiva went on an enterprise of discovery mainly by land. The latter died at Cairo, the former made his way to Cananor, Calecut, and Goa, and thence back to Cairo, where he found that his companion had died. He then set out again, and eventually came into the kingdom of Shoa,[1] to the court of "the King of Habbesh," who fulfilled sufficiently in Covilham's eyes the idea of Prester John, and was accordingly called so. It is a curious coincidence, that an ambassador from the King of Habbesh, called Lucas Marcos, a priest of that country, came about this time to Rome, and afterwards to Lisbon, which circumstance gave a new impetus to all the King of Portugal's "hopes, wishes, and endeavours."

A more remarkable person even than an ambassador from Prester John arrived nearly at the same time at Lisbon. This was Bemoin, Prince of Jalof. Bemoin came to seek the protection of the King of

[1] A country in the south of Abyssinia. Tegulet, the ancient capital of Shoa, is in 38° 40′ E. long., and 9° 45′ N. lat.

Portugal, and the reason of his coming was as follows: He was the brother, on the mother's side, of Brian, King of Jalof. This king was inert and vicious. He had, however, the wisdom to make Bemoin prime minister, and to throw all the cares and troubles of governing upon him. Nothing was heard in the kingdom but of Bemoin. But he, seeing, perhaps, the insecurity of his position, diligently made friends with the Portuguese, keeping aloof, however, from becoming a convert, though he listened respectfully to those who expounded the Christian faith to him. Cibitab, a brother of the inert Brian, by the father's side, became jealous of Bemoin, revolted, killed Brian, and vanquished Bemoin, who thereupon threw himself upon the protection of his Portuguese friends, and came to Lisbon.

Bemoin was received magnificently by King John of Portugal. The negro prince had formerly alleged that one of his reasons for not becoming a Christian was the fear of disgusting his followers; but, being in Portugal, that reason no longer held good, and he became a convert, being baptized as Don John Bemoin, having King John for a godfather. Twenty-four of Bemoin's gentlemen received baptism after him. This is the account of his reception: "Bemoin, because he was a man of large size and fine presence, about forty years old, with a long and well-arranged beard, appeared indeed not like a barbarous pagan, but as one of our own princes, to whom all honour and reverence were due. With equal majesty and gravity of demeanour he commenced and finished his oration, using such inducements to make men bewail his sad fortune in exile, that only seeing these natural signs of sorrow, people comprehended what

the interpreter afterwards said. Having finished the statement of his case as a good orator would, in declaring that his only remedy and only hope was in the greatness and generosity of the king, with whom he spoke aside for a short time, he was answered by the king in few words, so much to his satisfaction that immediately it made a change in his whole look, spirits, and bearing, rendering him most joyous. Taking leave of the king, he went to kiss the queen's hand, and then that of the prince, to whom he said a few words, at the end of which he prayed the prince that he would intercede in his favour with the king. And thence he was conducted to his lodgings by all the nobility that had accompanied him."

After this, Bemoin had many conversations with the king, and always acquitted himself well. Amongst other things, he gave information respecting various African nations, and especially of the king of a Jewish people, who in many things resembled Christians. Here again the Portuguese monarch was delighted at finding himself upon the traces of Prester John.

It must not be forgotten to mention that the king made great rejoicings in honour of Bemoin's conversion, on which occasion the negro prince's attendants performed singular feats on horseback.

Bemoin maintained his favour at the Portuguese court, and succeeded in his object of obtaining military assistance. He was sent back to his own country with a Portuguese squadron of twenty caravels, which had for its instructions, besides his restitution, to found a fort on the banks of the river Senegal.

The Portuguese arrived at the river, and began building the fort, but are said to have chosen an unhealthy spot to build on. Whether they could

have chosen a healthy one is doubtful. The commander, however, Pedro Vaz, thought that there was treachery on Bemoin's part, and killed him with the blow of a dagger on board his vessel. The building was discontinued, and Pedro Vaz returned to Portugal, where he found the king excessively vexed and displeased at the fate of Bemoin.

The story of Bemoin is interesting, not that it carries forward the history much, but it and other such narratives show what were the temper, manners, and views of Europeans and Africans towards each other, and indicates what might have been made out of their intercourse.

King John the Second was more successful in converting the inhabitants of Congo than of Jalof. The ambassador from Congo, having spent two years at Lisbon, during which his attendants learnt the Portuguese language and were instructed in Christian doctrine, was sent back to his own country with three Portuguese vessels. The Portuguese were well received: mass was performed in the midst of thousands of negroes; a church was built; and the King of Congo became Christian and took the name of John. He had occasion at that time to make war against a neighbouring people, and sallying forth with a cross depicted on his banner, he was victorious. After this, the Portuguese expedition, which really seems to have come out for no other purpose than to introduce Christianity into Congo, returned, leaving persons capable of continuing the work of conversion. The old negro king soon grew a little cold towards Christianity, disliking much its monogamic rules. He had two sons: the elder approving and the other disapproving of the new faith. The king himself inclined to his pagan

younger son, and the other was disinherited. On the death of the old monarch, the younger son suddenly attacked the other, who had only about him thirty-seven followers, Portuguese and negroes. However, under the Christian banner and probably with some little aid of Christian discipline, the elder vanquished his younger brother with all his host, became king, and did his best to establish Christianity throughout his dominions.

This King of Congo reigned fifty years; he was not only a warm favourer of Christianity, but himself an active preacher, having qualified himself by learning the Portuguese language and studying the Scriptures. He sent his children and grandchildren over to Portugal, had them well taught both in Latin and Portuguese, and of his own lineage there were two bishops in his kingdom. Barros tells us that all these things were done at the expense of the kings of Portugal. A very noble work it was of theirs: and in the present state of that kingdom these are the works which may console the Portuguese nation and their rulers with a not unbecoming recollection of past greatness, and, perhaps, reanimate them to great deeds again.

The historian may now stop in his task of tracing Portuguese discovery along the coast of Africa. We have seen it making its way with quiet perseverance, for seventy years, from Cape Nam to the Cape of Good Hope, a distance of some six thousand miles. This long course of discovery has been almost entirely thrown into shade by the more daring and brilliant discovery of America, which we have now to enter upon. Yet these proceedings on the African coast had in them all the energy, perseverance, and courage which distinguished American discovery. Prince

Henry himself was hardly a less personage than Columbus. They had different elements to contend in. But the man whom princely wealth and position, and the temptation to intrigue which there must have been in the then state of the Portuguese court, never induced to swerve from the one purpose which he maintained for forty years, unshaken by popular clamour, however sorely vexed he might be with inward doubts and misgivings; who passed laborious days and watchful nights in devotion to this one purpose, enduring the occasional shortcomings of his agents with that forbearance which springs from a care for the enterprise in hand, so deep as to control private vexation (the very same motive which made Columbus bear so mildly with insult and contumely from his followers)—such a man is worthy to be put in comparison with the other great discoverer who worked out his enterprise through poverty, neglect, sore travail, and the vicissitudes of courts. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that Prince Henry was undoubtedly the father of modern geographical discovery, and that the result of his exertions must have given much impulse to Columbus, if it did not first move him to his great undertaking.

After the above eulogium on Prince Henry, which is not the least more than he merited, his kinsmen, the contemporary Portuguese monarchs, should come in for their share of honourable mention, as they seem to have done their part in African discovery with much vigour, without jealousy of Prince Henry, and with high and noble aims. It would also be but just to include, in some part of this praise, the many brave captains who distinguished themselves in these enterprises.

The rediscovery of America (I say "rediscovery," because I do not doubt that it was discovered by the Northmen[1] in the ninth and tenth centuries), just at the time when the whole of the western coast of Africa had been made out by the Portuguese, appears, humanly speaking, to have furnished a most inopportune conjuncture for evil. Had not America afforded a market for slaves, we hardly see where else it could have grown up, and if it had not grown up then, legitimate commerce would have come in its place, and prevented any such trade. Black slaves might have been for some time a favourite part of the grandeur of a great household, but we do not see how they could have occupied a country already stocked with hardy labourers, fitted for the soil, as was the case with Europe.

How far the great discoverer, on whose career we are about to enter, was himself actually concerned in these African expeditions we have no means of deciding. But there can be little doubt that this raising the curtain of the unknown, this glimpse of new countries, gave a keen stimulus to the researches of geographers, and, in fact, set the fashion of discovery. Men's minds were drawn into this special channel; and it remained for Christopher Columbus first to form a sound theory out of the conflicting views of the cosmographers, and finally to carry out that theory with the boldness and resolution which have made his name one of those beacon-fires which carry on from period to period the tidings of the world's great history through successive ages.

[1] See Appendix III.

CHAPTER III

EARLY YEARS OF COLUMBUS

THE question of Columbus's birthplace has been almost as hotly contested as that of Homer's. A succession of pamphleteers had discussed the pretensions of half a dozen different Italian villages to be the birthplace of the great navigator; but still archæologists were divided on the subject, when, at a comparatively recent period, the discovery of the will in which Columbus bequeathed part of his property to the Bank of Genoa, conclusively settled the point in favour of that city. "Thence I came," he says, "and there was I born." As to the date of his birth there is no such direct evidence; and conjectures and inferences, founded on various statements in his own writings, and in those of his contemporaries, range over the twenty years from 1436 to 1456, in attempting to assign the precise time of his appearance in the world. Mr. Irving adopts the earlier of these two dates, upon the authority of a remark by Bernaldez, the curate of Los Palacios, which speaks of the death of Columbus in the year 1506, "at a good old age, being seventy years old, a little more or less." But this statement has an air of vagueness, and is, moreover, inconsistent with several passages in Columbus's own letters.[1] And the evidence of the ancient authorities who seem

[1] "His hair," says his son Fernando, "turned white before he was thirty." This would add to his apparent age, and might have deceived Bernaldez.

most to be relied on points rather to the year 1447 or 1448 as the probable date.

His father was a wool-carder; but this fact does not necessarily imply, in a city of traders like Genoa, that his family was of particularly humble origin. At any rate, as is not unusual, when the light of a great man's birth is thrown upon its records, real and possible, it presents some other names not altogether unworthy to be inscribed among the great man's ancestors. Christopher was not, he says in a letter to a lady of the Spanish court, the first admiral of his family—referring, evidently, to two naval commanders bearing his name, who had attained some distinction in the maritime service of Genoa and France, and the younger of whom, Colombo el Mozo, was in command of a French squadron in the expedition undertaken by John of Anjou against Naples for the recovery of the Neapolitan crown. But his relationship with these Colombos,[1] if traceable at all, was probably only a very distant one, and his son, in admitting this, wisely says that the glory of Christopher is quite enough, without there being a necessity to borrow any from his ancestors.

At a very early age he became a student at the University of Pavia, where he laid the foundations of that knowledge of mathematics and natural science which stood him in good stead throughout his life. At Genoa he would naturally regard the sea as the great field of enterprise which produced harvests of rich wares and spoils of glorious victories; and he may have heard, now and then, news of the latest conclusions of the Arabic geographers at Senaar, and rumours of explorations down the

[1] See Appendix IV.

African coast, which would be sure to excite interest among the maritime population of his birthplace. It is not wonderful that, exposed to such influences, he preferred a life of adventure on the sea to the drudgery of his father's trade in Genoa. Accordingly, after finishing his academical course at Pavia, he spent but a few irksome months as a carder of wool (*tector panni*), and actually entered on his nautical career before he was fifteen years old.

Of his many voyages, which of them took place before, and which after, his coming to Portugal, we have no distinct record; but it is certain that he traversed a large part of the known world, that he visited England, that he made his way to Iceland and Friesland [1] (where he may possibly have heard vague tales of the discoveries by the Northmen in North America), that he had been at El Mina, on the coast of Guinea, and that he had seen the islands of the Grecian Archipelago. "I have been seeking out the secrets of nature for forty years," he says, "and wherever ship has sailed, there have I voyaged." But beyond a few vague allusions

[1] The account of this voyage to the north of Europe, as commonly quoted, furnishes a singular instance of the inaccuracy of translators in the matter of figures. Columbus is there made to say, that at the Ultima Thule, which he reached, "the tides were so great as to rise and fall twenty-six fathoms," *i.e.* 156 feet. Of course this is an absurdity; for no tides in Europe rise much above fifty feet. We have no record of the exact words used by Columbus, but in the extant Italian translation he is made to speak of the rise being *venti sei bracchia, i.e.* twenty-six ells (not fathoms), or about fifty-two feet. But even this reduced estimate must be excessive. Except in the Bristol Channel there is no rise of tide in the seas of Northern Europe which at all approaches this limit. At Reikiavik (Iceland) the rise is seventeen and a half feet. In Greenland it varies from a minimum of seven feet at Julianshaab to a maximum of twelve and a half feet at Frederikshaab.

of this kind, we know scarcely anything of these early voyages. However, he mentions particularly his having been employed by King Réné of Provence to intercept a Venetian galliot. And this exploit furnishes illustrations both of his boldness and his tact. During the voyage the news was brought that the galliot was convoyed by three other vessels. Thereupon the crew were unwilling to hazard an engagement, and insisted that Columbus should return to Marseilles for reinforcement. Columbus made a feint of acquiescence, but craftily arranged the compass so that it appeared that they were returning, while they were really steering their original course, and the crew, thinking all the while that they were in full sail for Marseilles, arrived at Carthagena on the next morning.

Considering how much more real the hero of a biography appears if we can picture him accurately in our mind's eye, and see him " in his habit as he lived," it is singularly unfortunate that the personal appearance of Columbus has been so variously described by the old historians that it is impossible to speak with certainty on the subject. Strangely enough, too, no well-authenticated portrait of the great discoverer exists. Ferdinand Columbus, who would be a good authority, fails to give us, in describing his father, any of those little touches which make up a good literary photograph. We learn, however, that he had a commanding presence, that he was above the middle height, with a long countenance, rather full cheeks, an aquiline nose, and light grey eyes full of expression. His hair was naturally light in colour, but, as has been already stated, it turned nearly white while he was still a young man.

The peculiar characteristics of his mind are such as we might naturally expect to find in the originator of such a work as the discovery of America—who was, indeed, one of the great spirits of the earth; but still of the same order of soul to which great inventors and discoverers have mostly belonged. Lower down, too, in mankind there is much of the same nature leading to various kinds of worthy deeds, though there are no more continents for it to discover.

But to return to the renowned personage of whom we are speaking. There was great simplicity about him, and much loyalty and veneration. The truly great are apt to believe in the greatness of others, and so to be loyal in their relations here; while, for what is beyond here, a large measure of veneration belongs to them, as having a finer and more habitually present consciousness than most men of something infinitely above what even their imaginations can compass. He was as magnanimous as it was possible, perhaps, for so sensitive and impassioned a person to be. He was humane, self-denying, courteous. He had an intellect of that largely inquiring kind which may remind us of our great English philosopher, Bacon. He was singularly resolute and enduring. The Spaniards have a word, *longanimidad*, which has been well applied in describing him, as it signifies greatness and constancy of mind in adversity. He was rapt in his designs, having a ringing for ever in his ears of great projects, making him deaf to much, perhaps, that prudence might have heeded: one to be loved by those near him, and likely by his presence to inspire favour and respect.

At what precise period his great idea came into his mind we have no means of ascertaining. The continuous current of Portuguese discoveries had,

as we have seen, excited the mind of Europe, and must have greatly influenced Columbus, living in the midst of them. This may be said without in the least detracting from his merits as a discoverer. In real life people do not spring from something baseless to something substantial, as people in sick dreams. A great invention or discovery is often like a daring leap, but it is from land to land, not from nothing to something; and if we look at the subject with this consideration fully before us, we shall probably admit that Columbus had as large a share in the merit of his discovery as most inventors or discoverers can lay claim to. If the idea which has rendered him famous was not in his mind at the outset of his career of investigation, at any rate he had from the first a desire for discovery, or, as he says himself, the wish to know the secrets of this world. It may be a question whether this impulse soon brought him to his utmost height of survey, and that he then only applied to learning to confirm his first views; or whether the impulse merely carried him along with growing perception of the great truth he was to prove, into deep thinking upon cosmographical studies, Portuguese discoveries, the dreams of learned men, the labours of former geographers, the dim prophetic notices of great unknown lands, and vague reports amongst mariners of driftwood seen on the seas. But at any rate we know that he arrived at a fixed conclusion that there was a way by the west to the Indies; that he could discover this way, and so come to Cipango,[1] Cathay, the Grand Khan, and all he had met with in the gorgeous descriptions of Marco Polo and other ancient authorities. We may not pretend to lay down the

[1] See Notes.

exact chronological order of the formation of the idea in his mind, in fact to know more about it than he would probably have been able to tell us himself. And it must not be forgotten that his enterprise, as compared with that of the Portuguese along the coast of Africa, was as an invention compared to an improvement. Each new discovery, then, was but a step beyond that which had preceded it; Columbus was the first to steer boldly from shore into the waste of waters, an originator, not a mere improver.

Fernando Columbus [1] divides into three classes the grounds on which his father's theory was based; namely, reasons from nature, the authority of writers, and the testimony of sailors. He believed the world to be a sphere; he under-estimated its size; he over-estimated the size of the Asiatic continent. The farther that continent extended to the eastward the nearer it came round towards Spain. And this, in a greater or less degree, had been the opinion of the ancient geographers. Both Aristotle and Seneca thought that a ship might sail "in a few days" from Cadiz to India. Strabo, too, believed that it might be possible to navigate on the same parallel of latitude, due west from the coast of Africa or Spain to that of India. The accounts given by Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville of their explorations towards China confirmed the exaggerated idea of the extent of Eastern Asia.

But of all the works of learned men, that which, according to Ferdinand Columbus, had most weight with his father, was the *Cosmographia* of Cardinal Aliaco.[2] And this book affords a good illustration of the then state of scientific knowledge. Learned arguments are interspersed with the most absurd

[1] See Appendix V. [2] See Notes.

fables of lion-bodied men and dog-faced women; grave, and sometimes tolerably sound, disquisitions on the earth's surface are mixed up with the wildest stories of monsters and salamanders, of giants and pigmies. It is here that we find the original of our modern acquaintance, the sea-serpent, described as being " of huge size, so that he kills and devours large stags, and is able to cross the ocean; " and the wonders of the unknown world are enunciated with a circumstantial minuteness which must have easily won the credence of a willing disciple like Columbus. He was also confirmed in his views of the existence of a western passage to the Indies by Paulo Toscanelli, the Florentine philosopher, to whom much credit is due for the encouragement he afforded to the enterprise. That the notices, however, of western lands were not such as to have much weight with other men is sufficiently proved by the difficulty which Columbus had in contending with adverse geographers and men of science in general, of whom, he says, he never was able to convince any one. After a new world had been discovered, many scattered indications were then found to have foreshown it. " When he promised a new hemisphere," writes Voltaire, " people maintained that it could not exist, and when he had discovered it, that it had been known a long time." It was to confute such detractors that he resorted to the well-known expedient for making an egg stand on end; an illustration of the meaning of originality which, by the way, was not itself original, as Brunelleschi had already employed it when his merit in devising a plan for raising the cupola of Florence Cathedral was questioned.

Of the amount of evidence furnished by the

testimony of sailors, it is difficult to speak with any degree of accuracy. Rumours of driftwood, apparently carved with some savage implements; of mammoth reeds, corresponding with Ptolemy's account of those indigenous to India; even of two corpses, cast up on one of the Azores, and presenting an appearance quite unlike that of any race of Europe or Africa—all seem to have come to the willing ears of Columbus, and to have been regarded by him as "confirmations, strong as proofs of holy writ," of the great theory.

About the year 1470, Columbus arrived at Lisbon. According to the account given by his son, and adopted by the historian Bossi, he had sailed with Colombo el Mozo (the nephew of that "first admiral of the family" of whom we have already heard) on a cruise to intercept some Venetian merchantmen on their way home from Flanders. At break of day the battle began, off Cape St. Vincent, and lasted till nightfall. The privateer commanded by Columbus grappled a huge Venetian galley, which, after a hand-to-hand struggle, caught fire, and the flames spread to the privateer. Friends and enemies alike sought safety in the sea, and Columbus, supporting himself on an oar, succeeded, when nearly exhausted, in gaining the land, which was at some six miles' distance. God preserved him, says his son, for greater things.

It was probably not long after this that he married Donna Felipa Munnis Perestrelo, who was residing at the convent of All Saints, in Lisbon, where he was a regular attendant at the services of the church. She was a daughter of that captain of Prince Henry's who has been already mentioned as the first governor of Porto Santo. On that island, after a short residence

in the Portuguese capital, Columbus took up his abode, busying himself with the papers of his deceased father-in-law, and earning a livelihood by making maps and charts for sale. It is a curious fact that the great chief of American discoverers should thus have inhabited a spot which was the first advanced outpost in African discovery. He was here on the high road to Guinea, and being in constant communication with the explorers of the new regions, it was likely that he would become imbued with some of their enthusiasm for adventure.

Shrouded in obscurity as this period of his life remains, we are only able to find vague traditions of the unsuccessful effort which Columbus made to induce the Senate of Genoa to take up his project. From the Portuguese crown he could scarcely look for help, embroiled as it was in costly wars, and having already a field for discovery along the African coast, which it would scarcely be wise to forsake for an undertaking similar in kind, but more hazardous and less definite. However, King John the Second, to whom Columbus applied, seems to have listened with attention to the exposition of his scheme, and indeed, according to the account of Fernando, to have given a sort of qualified promise of his support, but to have disagreed with Columbus as to terms. The king referred the matter to a Committee of Council for Geographical Affairs, before whom Columbus laid his plans; but it is possible that even in the fifteenth century boards had come to regard projectors as their natural enemies, and the report of the committee was entirely adverse to the scheme for Atlantic discovery. But it seems that the king was not satisfied yet, whereupon the Bishop of Ceuta (who had headed the opposition to Columbus in the

council) suggested that a caravel should be secretly equipped and sent out, with instructions founded on the plan laid before the committee. And this piece of episcopal bad faith was actually perpetrated. The caravel, however, returned without having accomplished anything, the sailors not having had heart to adventure far enough westward. It was not an enterprise to be carried out successfully by men who had only stolen the idea of it.

CHAPTER IV

COLUMBUS IN SPAIN

Columbus, disgusted at the treatment he had received from the Portuguese court, quitted Lisbon for Spain, probably in the year 1485, with his son Diego, the only issue of his marriage with Donna Felipa, now no longer living. Here he addressed himself to the Duke of Medina Sidonia, and to the Duke of Medina Celi, whose extensive possessions along the coasts of Spain were likely to incline them in favour of a maritime expedition. There is some uncertainty as to the degree of encouragement which he received from them; but long afterwards, when Columbus had succeeded, the Duke of Medina Celi wrote to the Cardinal of Spain showing that he (the duke) had maintained Columbus two years in his house, and was ready to have undertaken the enterprise, but that he saw it was one for the queen herself, and even then he wished to have had a part in it. Probably any man in whose house Columbus resided for two years would have caught some portion of his enthusiasm, and have been ready to take up his project. It may be conjectured, however, that none of the nobles of the Spanish court would have been likely to undertake the matter without some sanction from the king or queen. To the queen, accordingly, the Duke of Medina Celi addressed a letter, of which Columbus was himself the bearer, commending his enterprise to the royal favour. But the juncture was singularly inopportune for

the consideration of any peaceful project. The war with the Moors was raging more and more furiously, as they were driven back, contesting every inch of ground, farther and farther from the heart of the kingdom. The court was now at Cordova, actively preparing for the campaign which was to result in that subjugation of the crescent to the cross, throughout the Peninsula, which was completed by the conquest of Granada some six years later. Amid the clang of arms and the bustle of warlike preparation, Columbus was not likely to obtain more than a slight and superficial attention to a matter which must have seemed remote and uncertain. Indeed, when it is considered that the most pressing internal affairs of kingdoms are neglected by the wisest rulers in times of war, it is wonderful that he succeeded in obtaining any audience at all. However, he was fortunate enough to find at once a friend in the treasurer of the household, Alonso de Quintanilla, a man who, like himself, "took delight in great things," and who obtained a hearing for him from the Spanish monarchs. Ferdinand and Isabella did not dismiss him abruptly. On the contrary, it is said, they listened kindly; and the conference ended by their referring the business to the queen's confessor, Fra Hernando de Talavera, who was afterwards Archbishop of Granada. This important functionary summoned a junta of cosmographers (not a promising assemblage!) to consult about the affair, and this junta was convened at Salamanca, in the summer of the year 1487. Here was a step gained; the cosmographers were to consider his scheme, and not merely to consider whether it was worth taking into consideration. But it was impossible for the jury to be unprejudiced. All inventors, to a certain

extent, insult their contemporaries by accusing them of stupidity and of ignorance. And the cosmographical pedants, accustomed to beaten tracks, resented the insult by which this adventurer was attempting to overthrow the belief of centuries. They thought that so many persons wise in nautical matters as had preceded the Genoese mariner never could have overlooked such an idea as this which had presented itself to his mind. Moreover, as the learning of the Middle Ages resided for the most part in the cloister, the members of the junta were principally clerical, and combined to crush Columbus with theological objections. Texts of Scripture were adduced to refute his theory of the spherical shape of the earth, and the weighty authority of the fathers of the church was added to overthrow the "foolish idea of the existence of antipodes; of people who walk, opposite to us, with their heels upwards and their heads hanging down; where everything is topsy-turvy, where the trees grow with their branches downwards, and where it rains, hails, and snows upwards." King David, St. Paul, St. Augustine, Lactantius, and a host of other theological authorities were all put in evidence against the Genoese mariner: he was confronted by the "conservatism of lawyers united to the bigotry of priests." Las Casas displays his usual acuteness when he says that the great difficulty of Columbus was, not that of teaching, but that of unteaching: not of promulgating his own theory, but of eradicating the erroneous convictions of the judges before whom he had to plead his cause. In fine, the junta decided that the project was "vain and impossible, and that it did not belong to the majesty of such great princes to determine anything upon such weak grounds of information."

Ferdinand and Isabella seem not to have taken the extremely unfavourable view of the matter entertained by the junta of cosmographers, or at least to have been willing to dismiss Columbus gently, for they merely said that, with the wars at present on their hands, and especially that of Granada, they could not undertake any new expenses, but when that war was ended, they would examine his plan more carefully.

Thus terminated a solicitation at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella which, according to some authorities, lasted five years; for the facts above mentioned, though short in narration, occupied no little time in transaction. During the whole of this period, Columbus appears to have followed the sovereigns in the movements which the war necessitated, and to have been treated by them with much consideration. Sums were from time to time granted from the royal treasury for his private expenses, and he was billeted as a public functionary in the various towns of Andalusia where the court rested. But his must have been a very up-hill task. Las Casas, who, from an experience larger even than that which fell to the lot of Columbus, knew what it was to endure the cold and indolent neglect of superficial men in small authority, and all the vast delay, which cannot be comprehended except by those who have suffered under it, that belongs to the transaction of any affair in which many persons have to co-operate, compares the suit of Columbus to a battle, "a terrible, continuous, painful, prolix battle." The tide of this long war (for war it was, rather than a battle) having turned against him, Columbus left the court, and went to Seville "with much sadness and discomfiture." During this dreary

period of a suitor's life—which, however, has been endured by some of the greatest men the world has seen, which was well known by close observation, or bitter experience, to Spenser, Camöens, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Bacon—one joy at least was not untasted by Columbus, namely, that of love. His beloved Beatrice, whom he first met at Cordova, must have believed in him, even if no one else had done so; but love was not sufficient to retain at her side a man goaded by a great idea, or perhaps that love did but impel him to still greater efforts for her sake, as is the way with lovers of the nobler sort.

Other friends, too, shared his enthusiasm, and urged him onward. Juan Perez de la Marchena, guardian of the monastery of La Rabida, in Andalusia, had been the confessor of Queen Isabella, but had exchanged the bustle of the court for the learned leisure of the cloister. The little town of Palos, with its seafaring population and maritime interests, was near the monastery, and the principal men of the place were glad to pass the long winter evenings in the society of Juan Perez, discussing questions of cosmography and astronomy. Among these visitors were Martin Alonzo Pinzon, the chief shipowner of Palos, and Garcia Hernandez, the village doctor; and one can fancy how the schemes of Columbus must have appeared to the little conclave as a ray of sunlight in the dulness of their simple life. Hernandez, especially, who seems to have been somewhat skilled in physical science, and therefore capable of appreciating the arguments of Columbus, became a warm believer in his project. It is worthy of notice that a person who appears only once, as it were, in a sentence in history, should have exercised so much influence upon it as Garcia Hernandez, who was

probably a man of far superior attainments to those around him, and was in the habit of deploring, as such men do, his hard lot in being placed where he could be so little understood. Now, however, he was to do more at one stroke than many a man who has been all his days before the world. Columbus had abandoned his suit at court in disgust, and had arrived at the monastery before quitting Spain to fetch his son Diego, whom he had left with Juan Perez to be educated. All his griefs and struggles he confided to Perez, who could not bear to hear of his intention to leave the country for France or England, and to make a foreign nation greater by allowing it to adopt his project. The three friends—the monk, the learned physician, and the skilled cosmographer—discussed together the propositions so unhappily familiar to the last-named member of their little council. The affection of Juan Perez and the learning of Hernandez were not slow to follow in the track which the enthusiasm of the great adventurer made out before them; and they became, no doubt, as convinced as Columbus himself of the feasibility of his undertaking. The difficulty, however, was not in becoming believers themselves, but in persuading those to believe who would have power to further the enterprise. Their discussions upon this point ended in the conclusion that Juan Perez, who was known to the queen, having acted as her confessor, should write to her highness. He did so; and the result was favourable. The queen sent for him, heard what he had to say, and in consequence remitted money to Columbus to enable him to come to court and renew his suit. He attended the court again; his negotiations were resumed, but were again broken off on the ground of the largeness of the

conditions which he asked for. His opponents said that these conditions were too large if he succeeded, and if he should not succeed and the conditions should come to nothing, they thought that there was an air of trifling in granting such conditions at all. And, indeed, they were very large; namely, that he was to be made an admiral at once, to be appointed viceroy of the countries he should discover, and to have an eighth of the profits of the expedition. The only probable way of accounting for the extent of these demands and his perseverance in making them, even to the risk of total failure, is that the discovering of the Indies was but a step in his mind to greater undertakings, as they seemed to him, which he had in view, of going to Jerusalem with an army and making another crusade. For Columbus carried the chivalrous ideas of the twelfth century into the somewhat self-seeking fifteenth. The negotiation, however, failed a second time, and Columbus resolved again to go to France, when Alonzo de Quintanilla and Juan Perez contrived to obtain a hearing for the great adventurer from Cardinal Mendoza, who was pleased with him. Columbus then offered, in order to meet the objections of his opponents, to pay an eighth part of the expense of the expedition. Still nothing was done. And now, finally, Columbus determined to go to France, and indeed had actually set off one day in January of the year 1492, when Luis de Santangel, receiver of the ecclesiastical revenues of the crown of Aragon, a person much devoted to the plans of Columbus, addressed the queen with all the energy that a man throws into his words when he is aware that it is his last time for speaking in favour of a thing which he has much at heart. He told her that he wondered

that, as she always had a lofty mind for great things, it should be wanting to her on this occasion. He endeavoured to pique her jealousy as a monarch, by suggesting that the enterprise might fall into the hands of other princes. Then he said something in behalf of Columbus himself, and the queen was not unlikely to know well the bearing of a great man. He intimated to her highness that what was an impossibility to the cosmographers might not be so in nature. Nor, continued he, should any endeavour in so great a matter be attributed to lightness, even though the endeavour should fail; for it is the part of great and generous princes to ascertain the secrets of the world. Other princes (he did not mention those of neighbouring Portugal) had gained eternal fame this way. He concluded by saying that all the aid Columbus wanted to set the expedition afloat was but a million of maravedis (equivalent to about £308 English money of the period); and that so great an enterprise ought not to be abandoned for the sake of such a trifling sum. These well-addressed arguments, falling in, as they did, with those of Quintanilla, the treasurer, who had great influence with the queen, prevailed. She thanked these lords for their counsel, and said she would adopt it, but they must wait until the finances had recovered a little from the drain upon them occasioned by the conquest of Granada, or if they thought that the plan must be forthwith carried out, she would pledge her jewels to raise the necessary funds. Santangel and Quintanilla kissed her hands, highly delighted at succeeding; and Santangel offered to advance the money required. Upon this the queen sent an alguazil to overtake Columbus and bring him back to the court. He was overtaken at the bridge of

Pinos, two leagues from Granada; returned to Santa Fé, where the sovereigns were encamped before Granada; was well received by Isabella; and finally the agreement between him and their catholic highnesses was settled with the secretary, Coloma.

Not much is seen of King Ferdinand in all these proceedings; and it is generally understood that he looked rather coldly upon the propositions of Columbus. We cannot say that he was at all unwise in so doing. His great compeer, Henry the Seventh, did not hasten to adopt the same project submitted to him by Bartholomew Columbus, sent into England [1] for that purpose by his brother Christopher; and it has not been thought to derogate from the English king's sagacity. Those who govern are in all ages surrounded by projectors, and have to clear the way about them as well as they can, and to take care that they get time and room for managing

[1] It is difficult to determine how the project brought before Henry the Seventh's notice by Bartholomew Columbus was received. Some say it was made a mockery of at the English court; others speak of it as actually accepted. Lord Bacon states that Bartholomew was taken by pirates on his voyage to England, which delayed him so much that "before he had obtained a capitulation with the king for his brother, the enterprise by him was achieved." It is probable that Henry listened with interest to Bartholomew Columbus, who was a man of much intelligence and great maritime knowledge. But it seems unlikely that the negotiation went very far, considering the rigid manner in which Columbus insisted upon his exact conditions being accepted by the Spanish court. No such bargain, at a distance, with a reserved and parsimonious monarch, was likely, therefore, to have been concluded. It appears, however, from a despatch from the Spanish ambassador to his sovereigns, dated the 25th July, 1498, that the English were not behind other nations in a thirst for discovery. "Merchants of Bristol," he says, "have for the last seven years sent out annually some ships in search of the island of Brazil and the Seven Cities." If this assertion is accurate, England must have anticipated Spain in the search for, though not in the discovery of, the Western world.

their own immediate affairs. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if good plans should sometimes share the fate which ought to attend, and must attend, the great mass of all projects submitted to men in power. Here, however, the ultimate event would justify the monarch's caution; for it would be hard to prove that Spain has derived aught but a golden weakness from her splendid discoveries and possessions in the New World.

Moreover, the characters of the two men being essentially opposed, it is probable that Ferdinand felt something like contempt for the uncontrolled enthusiasm of Columbus; and, upon the whole, it is rather to be wondered that the king consented to give the powers he did, than that he did not do more. Had it been a matter which concerned his own kingdom of Aragon, he might not have gone so far; but the expenses were to be eventually charged on Castile, and perhaps he looked upon the whole affair as another instance of Isabella's good-natured sympathy with enthusiasts. His own cool and wary nature must have distrusted this "pauper pilot, promising rich realms." [1]

The agreement between Columbus and their Catholic highnesses is to the following effect—

The favours which Christopher Columbus has asked from the King and Queen of Spain in recompense of the discoveries which he has made in the ocean seas, and as recompense for the voyage which he is about to undertake, are the following—

1. He wishes to be made admiral of the seas and countries which he is about to discover. He desires to hold this dignity during his life, and that it should descend to his heirs.

This request is granted by the king and queen.

[1] "Nudo nocchier, promettitor di regni."—Chiabrera.

2. Christopher Columbus wishes to be made viceroy of all the continents and islands.

Granted by the king and queen.

3. He wishes to have a share, amounting to a tenth part, of the profits of all merchandise, be it pearls, jewels, or any other things, that may be found, gained, bought, or exported from the countries which he is to discover.

Granted by the king and queen.

4. He wishes, in his quality of admiral, to be made sole judge of all mercantile matters that may be the occasion of dispute in the countries which he is to discover.

Granted by the king and queen, on the condition, however, that this jurisdiction should belong to the office of admiral, as held by Don Enriquez and other admirals.

5. Christopher Columbus wishes to have the right to contribute the eighth part of the expenses of all ships which traffic with the new countries, and in return to earn the eighth part of the profits.

Granted by the king and queen.

SANTA FÉ, in the Vega of Granada,
April 17, 1492.

This agreement is signed by the secretary, Coloma, and written by Almazan.

Then there is a sort of passport or commendatory letter intended for presentation to the Grand Khan, Prester John, or any other oriental potentate at whose territories Columbus might arrive—

FERDINAND AND ISABELLA TO KING ——.

The sovereigns have heard that he and his subjects entertain great love for them and for Spain. They

are moreover informed that he and his subjects very much[1] wish to hear news from Spain; and send, therefore, their admiral, Ch. Columbus, who will tell them that they are in good health and perfect prosperity.

GRANADA, *April* 30, 1492.

Armed with these royal commissions, Columbus left the court for Palos; and we may be sure that the knot of friends at the monastery were sufficiently demonstrative in their delight at the scheme on which they had pinned their faith being fairly launched. There was no delay in furnishing the funds for the expedition. From an entry in an account-book belonging to the Bishopric of Palencia, it appears that one million one hundred and forty thousand maravedis were advanced by Santangel in May, 1492, "being the sum he lent for paying the caravels which their highnesses ordered to go as the armada to the Indies, and for paying Christopher Columbus, who goes in the said armada." The town of Palos was ordered to provide two vessels.[2] But there was still

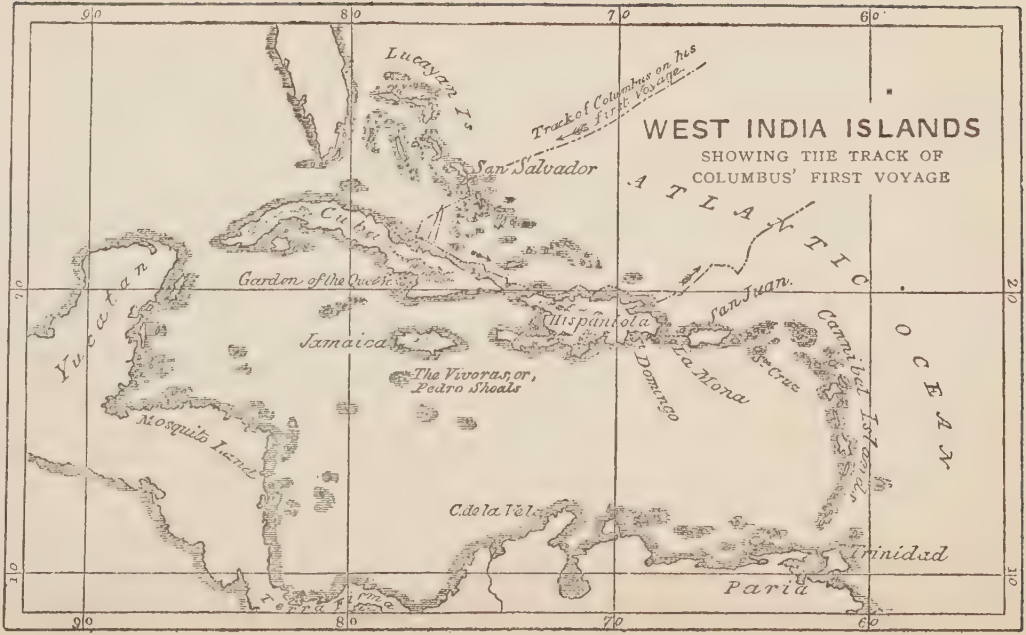
[1] This crediting the unknown ruler with an anxiety for the welfare of the Spanish sovereigns is really a delicious piece of diplomatic affectation.

[2] The requisition to the municipality of Palos runs thus: "In consequence of the offence which we received at your hands, you were condemned by our council to render us the service of two caravels, armed, at your own expense, for the space of twelve months, whenever and wherever it should be our pleasure to demand the same." (30th April, 1492.) A proclamation of immunity from civil and criminal process to persons taking service in the expedition was issued at the same time. The ship of Columbus was, therefore, a refuge for criminals and runaway debtors, a cave of Adullam for the discontented and the desperate. To have to deal with such a community was not one of the least of Columbus's difficulties.

a weighty difficulty to be surmounted. It was no easy matter to obtain crews for such an expedition. The sovereigns issued an order authorising Columbus to press men into the service, but still the numbers were incomplete, for the mariners of Palos held aloof, unwilling to risk their lives in what seemed to them the crazy project of a monomaniac. But Juan Perez was active in persuading men to embark. The Pinzons, rich men and skilful mariners of Palos, joined in the undertaking personally, and aided it with their money, and, by these united exertions, three vessels were manned with ninety mariners, and provisioned for a year.

The vessels were all of small size, probably of not more than one hundred tons' burden each, and, therefore, not larger than the American yachts whose ocean race from New York to Cowes was regarded as an example of immense hardihood, even in the year 1867. But Columbus considered them very suitable for the undertaking. The *Santa Maria*, which Columbus himself commanded, was the only one of the three that was decked throughout. The official persons and the crew on board her were sixteen in number. The two other vessels were of the class called caravels, and were decked fore and aft, but not amidships, the stem and the stern being built so as to rise high out of the water. One of them, the *Pinta*, was manned by a crew of thirty, commanded by Martin Alonzo Pinzon. The other, the *Niña*, had Vincent Yanez Pinzon for captain, and a crew of twenty-four men. The whole number of adventurers amounted to a hundred and twenty persons, men of various nationalities, including, by the way, among them, two natives of the British Isles.

[1] See Appendix VI.


WEST INDIA ISLANDS
SHOWING THE TRACK OF
COLUMBUS' FIRST VOYAGE
Track of Columbus on his first Voyage
Lucayan Is
San Salvador
Cuba
Garden of the Queen
Yucatan
Jamaica
The Vivoras, or, Pedro Shoals
Mosquito Land
Hispaniola
San Juan
La Mona
Domingo
Cannibal Islands
Trinidad
Paria
Terra Firma
ATLANTIC OCEAN
90
80
70
60
20
10

CHAPTER V

FIRST VOYAGE

At length all the preparations were complete, and on a Friday (not inauspicious in this case), the 3rd of August, 1492, after they had all confessed and received the sacrament, they set sail from the Bar of Saltes, making for the Canary Islands. One can fancy how the men and the women of Palos watched the specks of white sails vanishing in the west, and how, as each frail bark in turn disappeared in the great ocean, mothers and sisters turned weepingly away as if from a last farewell at the grave of their sailor kinsmen.

Columbus was now fairly afloat, and we may say with Milton, that—

> The world was all before him, where to choose.
> And Providence his guide.

His choice was made, however; and his Guide did not fail him.

He was about to change the long-continued, weary, dismal life of a suitor, for the sharp, intense anxiety of a struggle in which there was no alternative to success but deplorable, ridiculous, fatal failure. Speaking afterwards of the time he spent as a suitor at court, he says, "Eight years I was torn with disputes, and in a word, my proposition was a thing for mockery." It was now to be seen what mockery was in it. The following account of the voyage is mainly taken from an abridgment of Columbus's

own diary made by Las Casas, who in some places gives the admiral's own words.

The little squadron reached the Canary Islands in a few days, with no event worth recording, except that the caravel *Pinta*, commanded by Martin Alonzo Pinzon, unshipped her rudder. This was supposed to be no accident, but to have been contrived by the owners of the vessel, who did not like the voyage. The admiral (from henceforth Columbus is called "the admiral") was obliged to stay some time at the Canary Islands, to refit the *Pinta*, and to make some change in the cut of her sails. While this was being done, news was brought that three Portuguese government vessels were cruising in the offing with the intention of preventing the expedition. However, on the 6th of September, Columbus set sail from Gomera, and struck boldly out to sea, without meeting with any of his supposed enemies.

In the abridgment of the diary, under the date of the 19th of August, the admiral remarks that many Spaniards of these islands, "respectable men," swear that each year they see land; and he remembers how, in the year 1484, some one came from the island of Madeira to the King of Portugal to beg a caravel in order to go and discover that land which he declared he could see each year, and in the same manner. Had not the admiral been conscious of the substantial originality of his proceedings, he would hardly have been careful to collect these scattered notices which might afterwards be used, as many like them were used, to depreciate that originality. There is no further entry in the diary until the 6th of September, when they set out from Gomera (one of the Canary Islands) on their unknown way. For many days, what we have of the

diary is little more than a log-book, giving the rate of sailing, or rather two rates, one for Columbus's own private heed, and the other for the sailors. On the 13th of September, it is noted that the needle declined in the evening to the north-west, and on the ensuing morning to the north-east, the first time that such a variation had been observed, or at least recorded by Europeans. On the 14th, the sailors of the caravel *Niña* saw two tropical birds, which they said were never wont to be seen at more than fifteen or twenty leagues from shore. On the 15th, they all saw a meteor fall from heaven, which made them very sad. On the 16th, they first came upon those immense plains of seaweed (the *Fucus natans*) which constitute the Mar de Sargasso, and which occupy a space in the Atlantic almost equal to seven times the extent of France. The aspect of these plains greatly terrified the sailors, who thought they might be coming upon submerged lands and rocks; but finding that the vessels cut their way well through this seaweed, the sailors thereupon took heart. On the 17th, they see more of these plains of seaweed, and thinking themselves to be near land, they are almost in good spirits, when finding that the needle declines to the west a whole point of the compass and more, their hopes suddenly sink again: they begin "to murmur between their teeth," and to wonder whether they are not in another world. Columbus, however, orders an observation to be taken at daybreak, when the needle is found to point to the north again; moreover, he is ready with a theory sufficiently ingenious for that time to account for the phenomenon of variation which had so disturbed the sailors, namely, that it was caused by the north star moving round the pole.

The sailors are, therefore, quieted upon this head. In the morning of the same day they catch a crab, from which Columbus infers that they cannot be more than eighty leagues distant from land. The 18th, they see many birds, and a cloud in the distance; and that night they expect to see land. On the 19th, in the morning, comes a pelican (a bird not usually seen twenty leagues from the coast); in the evening, another; also drizzling rain without wind—a certain sign, as the diary says, of proximity to land.

The admiral, however, will not beat about for land, as he concludes that the land which these various natural phenomena give token of can only be islands, as indeed it proved to be. He will see them on his return; but now he must press on to the Indies. This determination shows his strength of mind, and indicates the almost scientific basis on which his great resolve reposed.

Accordingly, he was not to be diverted from the main design by any partial success, though by this time he knew well the fears of his men, some of whom had already come to the conclusion, "that it would be their best plan to throw him quietly into the sea, and say he unfortunately fell in, while he stood absorbed in looking at the stars." Indeed, three days after he had resolved to pass on to the Indies, we find him saying, for Las Casas gives his words, "Very needful for me was this contrary wind, for the people were very much tormented with the idea that there were no winds on these seas that could take them back to Spain."

On they go, having signs occasionally in the presence of birds and grass and fish that land must be near; but land does not come. Once, too, they

are all convinced that they see land: they sing the *Gloria in excelsis;* and even the admiral goes out of his course towards this land, which turns out to be no land. They are like men listening to a dreadful discourse or oration, that seems to have many endings which end not: so that the hearer listens at last in grim despair, thinking that all things have lost their meaning, and that ending is but another form of beginning.

These mariners were stout-hearted, too; but what a daring thing it was to plunge, down-hill as it were, into

> A world of waves, a sea without a shore,
> Tractless, and vast, and wild,[1]

mocked day by day with signs of land that neared not. And these men had left at home all that is dearest to man, and did not bring out any great idea to uphold them, and had already done enough to make them important men in their towns, and to furnish ample talk for the evenings of their lives. Still we find Columbus, as late as the 3rd of October, saying, "that he did not choose to stop beating about last week during those days that they had such signs of land, although he had knowledge of there being certain islands in that neighbourhood, because he would not suffer any detention, since his object was to go to the Indies; and if he should stop on the way, it would show a want of mind."

Meanwhile, he had a hard task to keep his men in any order. Peter Martyr, who knew Columbus well, and had probably been favoured with a special account from him of these perilous days, describes his way of dealing with the refractory mariners, and how he contrived to win them onwards from day

[1] Rogers.

to day; now soothing them with soft words, now carrying their minds from thought of the present danger by spreading out large hopes before them, not forgetting to let them know what their princes would say to them if they attempted aught against him, or would not obey his orders. With this untutored crowd of wild, frightened men around him, with mocking hopes, not knowing what each day would bring to him, on went Columbus. At last came the 11th of October, and with it indubitable signs of land. The diary mentions their finding on that day a table-board and a carved stick, the carving apparently wrought by some iron instrument. Moreover, the men in one of the vessels saw a branch of a haw tree with fruit on it. Now, indeed, they must be close to land. The sun went down upon the same weary round of waters which for so long a time their eyes had ached to see beyond, when, at ten o'clock, Columbus, standing on the poop of his vessel, saw a light, and called to him, privately, Pedro Gutierrez, a groom of the king's chamber, who saw it also. Then they called Rodrigo Sanchez, who had been sent by their highnesses as overlooker. I imagine him to have been a cold and cautious man, of the kind that are sent by jealous states to accompany and curb great generals, and who are not usually much loved by them. Sanchez did not see the light at first, because, as Columbus says, he did not stand in the place where it could be seen; but at last even he sees it, and it may now be considered to have been seen officially. "It appeared like a candle that went up and down, and Don Christopher did not doubt that it was true light, and that it was on land; and so it proved, as it came from people passing with lights from one cottage to another."

Their highnesses had promised a pension of ten thousand maravedis to the fortunate man who should see land first. The *Pinta* was the foremost vessel; and it was from her deck, at two o'clock in the morning, that land was first seen by Rodrigo de Triana. We cannot but be sorry for this poor common sailor, who got no reward, and of whom they tell a story, that in sadness and despite he passed into Africa, after his return to Spain, and became a Mohammedan. The pension was adjudged to the admiral: it was charged, somewhat ominously, on the shambles of Seville, and was paid him to the day of his death; for, says the historian Herrera, "he saw light in the midst of darkness, signifying the spiritual light which was introduced amongst these barbarous people, God permitting that, the war being finished with the Moors, seven hundred and twenty years after they had set foot in Spain, this work (the conversion of the Indians) should commence, so that the Princes of Castile and Leon might always be occupied in bringing infidels to the knowledge of the Holy Catholic faith."

These last words are notable. They are such as Columbus himself would probably have made use of in describing this, the crowning event of his life. In the preface to his diary, which is an address to Ferdinand and Isabella, he speaks at large of the motives of their highnesses. He begins by saying how, in this present year of 1492, their highnesses had concluded their war with the Moors, having taken the great city of Granada, at the siege of which he was present, and saw the royal banners placed upon the towers of the Alhambra. He then tells how he had given information to their highnesses of the lands of India, and of a prince, called the

Grand Khan, who had sent ambassadors to Rome, praying for doctors to instruct him in the faith; and how the holy father had never provided him with these doctors; and that great towns were perishing, from the belief of their inhabitants in idolatry, and from receiving amongst them "sects of perdition." After the above statement, he adds, "Your highnesses, as Catholic Christians and princes, lovers and furtherers of the Christian faith, and enemies of the sect of Mohammed, and of all idolatries and heresies, thought to send me, Christopher Columbus, to the aforesaid provinces of India to see the aforesaid princes, the cities and lands, and the disposition of them and of everything about them, and the way that should be taken to convert them to our holy faith."

Columbus then speaks of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain as occurring at the same time as that in which he received orders to pursue a westerly course to India, thus combining the two transactions together, no doubt as proofs of the devout intentions of their highnesses: and, indeed, throughout the document, he ascribes no motives to the monarchs but such as were religious.

The diary to which this address was prefixed is probably one of the books which their highnesses allude to in a letter to Columbus as being in their possession, and which they assured him they had not shown to anybody. I see no reason to doubt the perfect good faith of Columbus in making such a statement as that just referred to; and it is well to remark upon it, because we shall never come to a right understanding of those times and of the question of slavery as connected with them, unless we fully appreciate the good as well as the bad

motives which guided the most important persons of that era.

As for Queen Isabella, there can be no doubt about her motives. Even in the lamentably unjust things in which she was but too often concerned, she had what, to her mind, was compelling reason to act as she did. Perhaps there is hardly any great personage whose name and authority are found in connection with so much that is strikingly evil, all of it done, or rather assented to, upon the highest and purest motives. Whether we refer to the expulsion of the Jews, the treatment of the Moorish converts, or the establishment of the Inquisition, all her proceedings in these matters were entirely sincere and noble-minded. Methinks I can still see her beautiful majestic face (with broad brow, and clear, honest, loving eye) as it looks down upon the beholder from one of the chapels in the cathedral at Granada: a countenance too expressive and individual to be what painters give as that of an angel, and yet the next thing to it. Now, I could almost fancy, she looks down reproachfully, and yet with conscious sadness. What she would say in her defence, could we interrogate her, is, that she obeyed the voice of heaven, taking the wise and good men of her day as its interpreters. Oh! that she had but persisted in listening to it, as it spoke in her own kindly heart, when with womanly pity she was wont to intercede in favour of the poor cooped-up inmates of some closely beleaguered town or fortress! But at least the poor Indian can utter nothing but blessings on her. He might have needed no other "protector" had she lived; nor would slavery have found in his fate one of the darkest and most fatal chapters in its history.

But now, from Granada, and our fancies there, the narrative brings us back to the first land touched by Columbus. The landing of Columbus in the New World must ever be a conspicuous fact in the annals of mankind, and it was celebrated by a ceremonial worthy of the occasion. On the ensuing morning, after the light had been observed from the ships, being a Friday, the 12th of October, 1492, Columbus, clad in complete armour, and carrying in his hand the royal banner of Spain, descended upon the level shores of the small island [1] which had first greeted him, and which he found to be very fruitful —fresh and verdant, and "like a garden full of trees." [2] The other captains accompanied him, each of them bearing a banner with a green cross depicted upon it, and with the initials of Ferdinand and Isabella surmounted by their respective crowns — a device that well expressed the loyalty and devotion of Columbus, and had been chosen by him. These chief officers were followed by a large retinue from their crews. In numerous lines along the shore stood the simple islanders, looking on with innocent amazement.

On touching land, Columbus and all the Spaniards who were present fell upon their knees, and with tears—tears of that deepest kind which men do not know the cause of—poured forth their "immense thanksgivings to Almighty God."

The man who, of all that embassage, if we may call it so, from the Old to the New World, was certainly the least surprised by all he saw, was, at the same time, the most affected. For thus it is, that the boldness of a great design is never fully appreciated by the designer himself until he has

[1] San Salvador, one of the Bahamas. [2] See Appendix VII.

apparently accomplished his work, when he is apt, if it be indeed a great work, to look back with shuddering awe at his own audacity in having proposed it to mankind. The vast resolve which has sustained such a man throughout his long and difficult enterprise, having for the moment nothing to struggle against, dies away, leaving a strange sinking at the heart: and thus the greatest successes are often accompanied by a peculiar and bewildering melancholy. New difficulties, however, bred from success (for nothing is complete in life), soon arise to summon forth again the discoverer's energies, and to nerve him for fresh disappointments and renewed endeavours. Columbus will not fail to have his full share of such difficulties.

The followers of the great man, whose occasional faint-heartedness must often have driven all sleep from his weary eyelids throughout the watches of the night, now began to think with remorse how much suffering they had needlessly inflicted upon their greatly-enduring leader. They sought his pardon with tears, and, subdued for the moment by his greatness when illustrated by success, expressed in loving terms their admiration, their gratitude, and their assurances of fidelity. The placable Columbus received their gracious sayings with all the warmth and tenderness that belonged to his large-hearted and amiable character.

The great business of the day then commenced; and Columbus, with the due legal formalities, took possession, on behalf of the Spanish monarchs, of the island Guanahani, which he forthwith named San Salvador. The gravity of the proceeding must have astonished the beholding islanders. Their attention, however, was soon turned to the Spaniards

themselves; and they approached the strangers, wondering at their whiteness and at their beards. Columbus, as being the noblest-looking personage there present, and also from wearing a crimson scarf over his armour, attracted especial attention, and justly seemed, as he was, the principal figure in this great spectacle.

Columbus is for the present moment radiant with success. Our interest passes now from him to the new people he was amongst. And what were they like? Were they worthy of the efforts which the Old World had made to find them? Was there mind and soul enough in them for them to become good Christians? What says the greatest of the men who first saw them? What impression did they make on him? Let him answer for himself—

"Because they had much friendship for us, and because I knew they were people that would deliver themselves better to the Christian faith, and be converted more through love than by force, I gave to some of them some coloured caps and some strings of glass beads for their necks, and many other things of little value, with which they were delighted, and were so entirely ours that it was a marvel to see. The same afterwards came swimming to the ship's boats where we were, and brought us parrots, cotton threads in balls, darts and many other things, and bartered them with us for things which we gave them, such as bells and small glass beads. In fine, they took and gave all of whatever they had with good will. But it appeared to me they were a people very poor in everything. They went totally naked, as naked as their mothers brought them into the world."

Then Columbus goes on to say that these Indians

were well made, with very good countenances, but hair like horsehair, their colour yellow; and that they painted themselves. They neither carried arms, nor understood such things, for when he showed them swords, they took hold of them by the blade, and hurt themselves. Their darts were without iron; but some had a fish's tooth at the end. In concluding his description, he says, "they ought to make faithful servants, and of good understanding, for I see that very quickly they repeat all that is said to them, and I believe they would easily be converted to Christianity, for it appeared to me that they had no creed."

A little further on, the admiral says of the people of a neighbouring island, that they were more domestic and tractable than those of San Salvador, and more intelligent, too, as he saw in their way of reckoning for the payment of the cotton they brought to the ships. At the mouth of the Rio de Mares, some of the admiral's men, whom he had sent to reconnoitre, brought him word that the houses of the natives were the best they had seen. They were made, he says, like "Alfaneques (pavilions), very large, and appeared as royal tents without an arrangement of streets, except one here and there, and within they were very clean, and well swept, and their furniture very well arranged. All these houses were made of palm branches, and were very beautiful. Our men found in these houses many statues of women, and several heads fashioned like masks, and very well wrought. I do not know," he adds, "whether they have these for the love of the beautiful, or for purposes of worship." The Spaniards found also excellent nets, fish-hooks, and fishing-tackle. There were tame birds about the houses, and dogs which

did not bark. "Mermaids," too, the admiral saw on the coasts, but thought them "not so like ladies as they are painted."

Speaking of the Indians of the coast near the Rio del Sol, he says that they are "very gentle, without knowing what evil is, neither killing nor stealing." He describes the frank generosity of the people of Marien, and the honour they thought it to be asked to give anything, in terms which may remind his readers of the doctrines maintained by Christians in respect of giving.

It is interesting to observe the way in which, at this point of the narrative, a new product is introduced to the notice of the Old World—a product that was hereafter to become, not only an unfailing source of pleasure to a large section of the male part of mankind, from the highest to the lowest, but was also to distinguish itself as one of those commodities for revenue which are the delight of statesmen, the great financial resource of modern nations, and which afford a means of indirect taxation that has, perhaps, nourished many a war, and prevented many a revolution. Two discoverers, whom the admiral had sent out from the Puerto de Mares (one of them being a learned Jew, who could speak Hebrew, Chaldee, and some Arabic, and would have been able to discourse, as Columbus probably thought, with any of the subjects of the Grand Khan, if he had met them), found that the men of the country they came to investigate indulged in a "fumigation" of a peculiar kind. The smoke in question was absorbed into the mouth through a charred stick, and was caused by burning certain herbs wrapped in a dry leaf, which outer covering was called "tabaco." Las Casas, who carefully describes this process of imbibing

smoke, mentions that the Indians, when questioned about it, said that it took away fatigue, and that he has known Spaniards in the island of Hispaniola who adopted the same habit, and who, being reproved for it as a vice, replied that it was not in their power to leave it off. "I do not know," he adds, "what savour or profit they found in them" (*tabacos*). I cannot help thinking that there were several periods in his own life when these strange fumigations would have afforded him singular soothing and comfort. However that may be, there can be no doubt of the importance, financially and commercially speaking, of this discovery of tobacco; a discovery which, in the end, proved more productive to the Spanish crown than that of the gold mines of the Indies.

The excellent relations that existed between the expedition of Columbus and the inhabitants of Cuba may be seen from the fact that these two Christians, who were the first witnesses of tobacco-smoking, and who travelled with only two Indian attendants, were everywhere well and reverently received.

Resuming the thread of the history, it remains to be seen what more Columbus did and suffered in this voyage. The first Indians he met with had some few gold ornaments about them — poor wretches, if they had possessed the slightest gift of prophecy, they would have thrown these baubles into the deepest sea;—and they were asked whence came this gold? From a race, they said, living southwards, where there was a great king, who had much gold. On another occasion, other Indians being asked the same question, answered, "Cubanacan, Cubanacan." They meant the middle of Cuba; but their words at once suggested to Columbus the idea that he was now upon the traces of his long-looked-for friend,

Kublai Khan, the Khan of Khans. Indeed, it is almost ludicrous to see, throughout, how Columbus is possessed with the notions borrowed from his reading of Marco Polo and other travellers. He asks for " his Cipango," as Herrera slily puts it; and the natives at once point out to him the direction where that is. They thought he meant Cibao, where afterwards the best mines of gold were found. The admiral, bent on discovery, and especially on finding the *terra firma* which adjoined " his " India, did not stay long anywhere. Proceeding southwards from San Salvador, he discovered an island, or rather a group of islands, to which he gave the name of Santa Maria de la Concepcion; he then discovered Cuba, and coasted along the north-eastern part of that island; and afterwards, in due course, came to Hispaniola, called by the natives Hayti, in which island he landed upon the territory of King Guacanagari, where he was received most cordially.

Various conjectures have been made as to the different results which would have followed, both for the New and for the Old World, if Columbus had steered a little to the northward, or the southward, of the course which he actually took. One thing, however, is obvious, that in arriving at Hispaniola he came to a central point, not only of the West Indies, but of the whole of the New World, and a point, therefore, most felicitously situated for the spreading of future discovery and conquest.

It may be mentioned here, that Martin Alonzo Pinzon had wilfully parted company from the admiral while on the coast of Cuba: covetousness being probably the cause of this most undutiful proceeding. But, indeed, there is another instance of the insubordination of the mariners, which makes

the wonder only still greater how Columbus could have brought them across the Atlantic at all. One evening the admiral, after paying a visit to Guacanagari, seeing the sea quite calm, betook himself to rest. As he had not slept for two days and a night, it is probable his slumber was deep. Meanwhile, the steersman, contrary to the distinct orders of the admiral, gave the helm to a common sailor, a youth. All the sailors went to sleep. The sea was as calm "as water in a dish." Little by little the ship drifted on to a shoal. Directly they touch, the sailor-boy at the helm starts from his dream, and gives the alarm. The admiral jumps up first (for the responsibility of command seldom goes quite to sleep); then the officer whose watch it ought to have been hurries up, and the admiral orders him to lower the boat which they carried on the poop, and to throw out an anchor astern. Instead of obeying the admiral, this cowardly villain, with others like him, sprang into the boat and made off for the other vessel, which was about half a league off. The other vessel would not receive them, and they rowed back again. But it was too late. The admiral did what he could in the emergency: he cut down the mast, lightened the vessel as best he might, took out his people and went with them to the other caravel, sending his boat to Guacanagari to inform him of the misfortune. The good Guacanagari was moved to tears by this sad affair. He gave not only sympathy, however, but assistance. His people went out with their canoes, and in a few moments cleared the vessel of all the goods in it. Guacanagari was very careful that nothing should be lost. He himself stood guard over the things which had been taken out of the ship. Then he sent comforting messages

to the admiral, saying that he would give him what he had to make up for the loss. He put all the effects under shelter, and placed guards round them. The wrecker's trade might flourish in Cornwall; but, like other crimes of civilisation, it was unknown in St. Domingo. The admiral was evidently touched to the heart, as well he might be, by the kindness of these Indians. He thus expresses himself: "They are a loving, uncovetous people, so docile in all things, that I assure your highnesses I believe in all the world there is not a better people, or a better country; they love their neighbours as themselves, and they have the sweetest and gentlest way of talking in the world, and always with a smile."

The admiral resolved to found a colony in Guacanagari's land, "having found such good will and such signs of gold." In relating this, the Spanish historian, Herrera, makes some curious reflections. He looks upon the loss of the vessel as providential, in order that the true faith might be preached in that country. Then he says, how providence causes its work to be done, not on high motives only, but also on the ordinary ones which influence mankind. He concludes by observing that providence dealt with the Indians as a prudent father who has an ugly daughter, but makes up for her ugliness by the help of a large dowry. By the ugliness in this case he means the seas to be traversed, the hunger to be endured, and the labours to be undertaken, which he considers no other nation but the Spaniards would have encountered, even with the hope of greater booty.

With the timber of the unfortunate *Santa Maria* Columbus built a fort, and called it La Navidad, because he entered the port near there on Christmas

Day. He remained on very friendly terms with the good Cacique Guacanagari, and might have established himself most advantageously in that part of the country, if he could have been content to be a settler. But from the first moment of his discovery he doubtless had an anxious desire to get back to Spain, and to tell what he knew; and at times, perhaps, was fearful lest his grand secret, through some mischance to the expedition, should still perish with him. The great discoverer, therefore, now prepared to return homewards. He left his fort in trust to a small body of his followers,[1] whom he commended to the good offices of Guacanagari, not forgetting to impress upon them the excellent advice, to do no violence to man or woman, and, in short, to make their actions conformable to the idea (which the Indians first entertained of them) that they had come from heaven: then, having received the necessary provisions for his vessel from the friendly cacique, the admiral set sail for Spain on the 4th of January, 1493.

[1] They were forty in number, and it would be strange to find, but for the well-known fact that nothing brings men of different races together more than maritime and commercial enterprise, that in this small list there is an Irishman, "Guillermo Ires" (*Qy.* William Herries, or Rice) "natural de Galney, en Irlanda;" and an Englishman, "Tallarte de Lajes" (*Qy.* Arthur Lake) "ingles."—Navarrete, *Col. Dip.*, Num. 13.

CHAPTER VI

HOMEWARD BOUND

For two days Columbus stood to the eastward, but was met by a head wind which prevented him from making much progress. On doubling the promontory of Monte Christo, however, the look-out at the mast-head made an announcement which was worth more than a fair wind to the voyagers, since it assured them that the homeward voyage of the *Niña* was not to be made without a consort; that the chance of the tidings of success being safely conveyed to Europe was not to depend upon the fortunes of a single ship. For, sailing down swiftly before the breeze which had detained Columbus, the *Pinta* hove in sight, and the two vessels steered together into the bay of Monte Christo, which Columbus had recently quitted. Pinzon, as soon as the weather permitted, went on board the admiral's caravel to account for his desertion, which he stated to have been the accidental result of a storm which had driven him out of his course and out of sight of his leader. The admiral accepted this explanation, as a quarrel with Pinzon, whose townsmen and relations formed a large proportion of the crews, might cause a mutiny which would be fatal to the undertaking; but he did not fail to note in his diary his conviction of Pinzon's bad faith. The fact was, that Pinzon had heard from the natives of a certain island whence all the gold was said to come, and he had wished to

anticipate Columbus in the discovery of this El Dorado, and to secure the profits for himself. He had not found this home of the gold, but had met with some natives from whom he had obtained, by barter, a large quantity of the precious metal. Half of this he had appropriated: the other half he had distributed among his crew as a bribe to them to say nothing about the matter.

After a few days spent in refitting the vessels and preparing for the homeward voyage, the *Niña* and her consort again set sail, coasting St. Domingo in an easterly direction as far as the Gulf of Samana. It was in this neighbourhood that the first affray with the aborigines took place, in consequence of an attack made by them upon an exploring expedition which Columbus had sent out. But so anxious was he to preserve a good understanding with the natives that he did not leave the scene of the encounter until he had come to an amicable agreement with them. Another instance of the wise and humane policy by which he was actuated is to be found in the fact that, on discovering that Pinzon had carried on board six natives to be taken to Spain, and there sold as slaves, he insisted on their release, dismissing them, moreover, with presents of such glittering toys as their kinsmen would be likely to appreciate, and as might predispose them in favour of the Europeans.

On the 16th of January, Columbus left the Gulf of Samana on his homeward course, from which, however, he deviated at first in the hope of finding the island, peopled with Amazons, described by Marco Polo, of which he had understood the natives of St. Domingo to give him intelligence. Such a discovery would be, he considered, a conclusive proof of the identity of his new country with Marco Polo's

Indies, and when four natives offered to act as his guides, he thought it worth while to steer (in the direction of Martinique) in quest of the fabulous Amazonians. But the breeze blew towards Spain; home-sickness took possession of the crews; murmurs arose at the prolongation of the voyage among the currents and reefs of those strange seas; and, in deference to the universal wish of his companions, Columbus soon abandoned all idea of further discovery, and resumed his course for Europe.

At first the voyage was tranquil enough, though the adverse trade-winds, and the bad sailing of the *Pinta*,[1] retarded the progress of both vessels. But on the 12th of February a storm overtook them, and became more and more furious, until, on the 14th, it rose to a hurricane, before which Pinzon's vessel could only drift helplessly, while the *Niña* was able to set a close-reefed foresail, which kept her from being buried in the trough of the sea. In the evening both caravels were scudding under bare poles, and when darkness fell, and the signal light of the *Pinta* gleamed further and further off, through the blinding spray, until at last it could be seen no more, when his panic-stricken crew gave themselves up to despair, as the winds howled louder and louder, and the seas burst over his frail vessel—then, indeed, without a single skilled navigator to advise or to aid him, Columbus must have felt himself alone with the tempest and the night. But his brave heart bore

[1] This was occasioned by the defective condition of her mast, whereupon the admiral remarks in his diary, that "if Pinzon had exerted himself as much to provide himself with a new mast in the Indies, where there are so many fine trees, as he had in running away from him in the hope of loading his vessel with gold, they would not have laboured under that inconvenience."

him up, and his wonderful capacity for devising expedients on sudden emergencies did not forsake him. As the stores were consumed, the *Niña* felt the want of the ballast which Columbus had intended to take on board at the Amazonian Island. "Fill the empty casks with water," he said, "and let them serve as ballast," an expedient which has grown common enough now, but which then was probably original.

Nor, while he did all that human skill could suggest for the safety of his vessel, did Columbus neglect to invoke the aid of that Higher Power, at whose special instigation he believed himself to have undertaken the expedition. With his whole crew he drew lots to choose one of their number to perform a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Guadaloupe. The admiral was chosen. Twice more were lots drawn with a similar object, and once again the lot fell to the admiral. Afterwards, he and all the crew made a vow to go in procession, clothed in penitential garments, to the first church, dedicated to the Virgin, which they should meet with on arriving at land; and this vow, as we shall see presently, was followed by quite unexpected consequences.

When the chances of weathering the storm had become small indeed, Columbus determined that, if possible, the tidings of his discovery should not perish with him. He wrote a short account of his voyage on parchment, and this he enclosed in wax and placed in a cask,[1] which he committed to the

[1] About the year 1852 a paragraph went the round of the English press announcing the discovery of this cask on the African coast, by the barque *Chieftain*, of Boston (Mass.). Lamartine has accepted this story as correct, but it has never been authenticated, and there is a strong presumption in favour of its having been invented by some ingeniously circumstantial newspaper correspondent.

waves. Thinking, probably, that his crew would interpret this as an abandonment of all hope, he concealed from them the real nature of the contents of the cask, so that they believed that their commander was performing some religious rite which might assuage the fury of the elements.

On the 15th of February the storm abated to some extent, and at last they came in sight of some land on the E.N.E., which the pilots held to be the Rock of Lisbon, but which the admiral more accurately determined to be one of the Azores. Vainly endeavouring, however, to make head against the wind and the sea, they lost sight of this island, but came in sight of another, lying more to the south, round which they sailed on the night of the 17th, but lost an anchor in endeavouring to bring up near the land. On the following day they cast anchor, and succeeded in communicating with the inhabitants, from whom they learned that they had reached the island of St. Mary, belonging to the Portuguese. The governor sent amicable messages to Columbus, and announced his intention of visiting him. But when, in fulfilment of their vow, half the crew went, barefoot and in their shirts, on a pilgrimage to the chapel of St. Mary, which was not far from the harbour, the governor and his satellites lay in ambush on the road, and captured the whole band of pilgrims. The crowns of Portugal and Castile were still at peace, but it appears that this "man, dressed in a little brief authority," thought that the capture would gratify his sovereign. The remonstrances of the admiral were of no avail; and as the weather would not allow of his remaining in his present anchorage, he was forced to stand out to sea, and to run nearly to St. Michael's, with a crew which comprised only

three able seamen. On the 21st of February he returned to St. Mary's, and eventually, as the governor was unable to seize Columbus himself, he decided on recognising the royal commission which he produced, and restoring his crew. On the 24th the *Niña* again steered for Spain, but another tempest supervened, and continued with more or less fury for more than a week.

In this last storm, which raged with destructive violence along the west coast of the whole Continent of Europe, and which drove the *Pinta* almost helplessly towards a lee-shore, the dangers of the voyage reached their climax. "I escaped," says the admiral, "by the greatest miracle in the world." Fortunately, however, his seamanship was equal to the emergency, and on the afternoon of the 4th of March he came to anchor in the Tagus. To the King of Portugal, who happened to be at no great distance, he sent a despatch announcing his arrival and the result of his voyage, and, in reply, received a pressing invitation to court. With this he thought proper to comply, "in order not to show mistrust, although he disliked it," and was received by the king with the highest honours. This must have been almost too much of a triumph for a generous mind, considering that the court before which he was displaying the signs of a new world had refused the opportunity of securing the discovery for itself. The king, however, now took occasion to put in a claim to the newly found countries, basing it on that papal bull which has been mentioned in a previous chapter; but although Columbus, in the interest of his sovereigns, took care to repudiate this claim as decidedly as possible, his royal host continued to entertain him with the utmost consideration.

Possibly mistrusting the seamanship of his subordinates, Columbus refused the offer of safe conduct and means of transport to Spain by land; and on the 13th of March, in the teeth of a north-westerly wind and a heavy sea, left the Tagus for the bar of Saltes, and safely reached his starting-point at Palos on the 15th, again a Friday. The enthusiasm and excitement aroused by the success of the expedition were unbounded. At Palos, especially, where few families had not a personal interest in some of the band of explorers, the little community was filled with extraordinary delight. Not an individual member of the expedition but was elevated into a hero—not a debtor or a criminal whom the charter of immunity had led, rather than bear the ills he had, to fly to others that he knew not of, but had expiated his social misdeeds, and had become a person of consideration and an object of enthusiasm. The court was at Barcelona. Immediately on his arrival Columbus despatched a letter to the king and queen, stating in general terms the success of his project; and proceeded forthwith to present himself in person to their highnesses. Almost at the same time, the *Pinta*, which had been separated from her consort in the first storm which they encountered, made the port of Bayonne, whence Pinzon had forwarded a letter to the sovereigns, announcing "his" discoveries, and proposing to come to court and give full intelligence as to them. Columbus, whom he probably supposed to have perished at sea, he seems to have ignored utterly, and when he received a reply from the king and queen, directing him not to go to court without the admiral, chagrin and grief overcame him to such an extent that he took to his bed; and if any man ever died from mental distress

and a broken heart, that man was Martin Alonzo Pinzon.

Herrera tells us that the admiral now "entered into the greatest reputation," and the historian goes on to explain to his readers what the meaning of "reputation" is. "It does not consist," he tells us, "in success, but in doing something which cannot be easily comprehended, which compels men to think over and over again about it." And certainly, this definition makes the word particularly applicable to the achievement of Columbus.

The court prepared a solemn reception for the admiral at Barcelona, where the people poured out in such numbers to see him that the streets could not contain them. A triumphal procession like his the world had not yet seen: it was a thing to make the most incurious alert, and even the sad and solitary student content to come out and mingle with the mob. The captives that accompanied a Roman general's car might be strange barbarians of a tribe from which Rome had not before had slaves. But barbarians were not unknown creatures. Here, with Columbus, were beings of a new world. Here was the conqueror, not of man but of nature, not of flesh and blood but of the fearful unknown, of the elements, and, more than all, of the prejudices of centuries. We may imagine the rumours that must have gone before his coming. And now he was there. Ferdinand and Isabella had their thrones placed in the presence of the assembled court. Columbus approached the monarchs, and then, "his countenance beaming with modest satisfaction," knelt at the king's feet, and begged leave to kiss their highnesses' hands. They gave their hands; then they bade him rise and be seated before them. He

recounted briefly the events of his voyage—a story more interesting than the tale told in the court of Dido by Æneas, like whom he had almost perished close to home—and he concluded his unpretending narrative by showing what new things and creatures he had brought with him.

Ferdinand and Isabella fell on their knees, giving thanks to God with many tears; and then the choristers of the royal chapel closed the grand ceremonial by singing the "Te Deum." Afterwards men walked home grave and yet happy, having seen the symbol of a great work, something to be thought over for many a generation.

Other marks of approbation for Columbus were not wanting. The agreement between him and the sovereigns was confirmed. An appropriate coat of arms, then a thing of much significance, was granted to him in augmentation of his own. In the shield are conspicuously emblazoned the Royal Arms of Castile and Leon. Nothing can better serve to show the immense favour which Columbus had obtained at court by his discovery than such a grant; and it is but a trifling addition to make, in recounting his new honours, that the title of Don was given to him and his descendants, and also to his brothers. He rode by the king's side; was served at table as a grandee; "All hail!" was said to him on state occasions; and the men of his age, happy in that, had found out another great man to honour.

The more prosaic part of the business had then to be attended to. The sovereigns applied to the Pope Alexander the Sixth, to confer on the crowns of Castile and Leon the lands discovered and to be discovered in the Indies. To this application they soon received a favourable answer. The pope

granted to the Princes of Castile and Leon, and to their successors, the sovereign empire and principality of the Indies, and of the navigation there, with high and royal jurisdiction and imperial dignity and lordship over all that hemisphere. To preserve the peace between Spain and Portugal, the Pontiff divided the Spanish and Portuguese Indian sovereignties by an imaginary line drawn from pole to pole, one hundred leagues west of the Azores and the Cape de Verde Islands.

Meanwhile the preparations were being made for a second voyage to be undertaken by the admiral. After the arrival of the apostolic bulls, and before the departure of Columbus from Barcelona, the nine Indians brought by him were baptised. Here, parenthetically, we may take note of something which, if the fact did correspond with what the Spaniards thought about it, would, indeed, be notable. One of the Indians, after being baptised, died, and was, we are told,[1] the first of that nation, according to pious belief, who entered heaven.

We cannot help thinking of the hospitable and faithful Guacanagari, and imagining that, if his race had been like him, some one might already have reached the regions of the blessed. I do not, however, refer to this passage of Herrera for its boldness or its singularity, but because it brings before us again the profound import attached to baptism in those times, and may help to account for many seeming inconsistencies in the conduct of the Spaniards to the Indians.

In the conduct, however, of Ferdinand and Isabella towards the Indians there was nothing equivocal, but all that they did showed the tenderness and

[1] Herrera.

religious care of these monarchs for their new subjects. A special department for the control of colonial affairs was placed under the charge of Juan de Fonseca, an eminent ecclesiastic who was high in the royal favour, and on whom was eventually conferred the title of Patriarch of the Indies. But, unfortunately for the poor savages whose fate he was now to influence so largely, Fonseca's character had in it but little of the mild and forbearing spirit of Christianity. A shrewd man of business, a hard task-master, an implacable enemy, he displayed, during his long administration of Indian affairs, all the qualities of an unscrupulous tyrant, and was instrumental in inflicting on the islanders keener miseries than ever have been brought by conqueror upon a subject race.

Jealous of the rivalry of Portugal, the sovereigns took every means of hastening the preparations for a second voyage to be undertaken by the admiral. Twelve caravels and five smaller vessels were made ready, and were laden with horses and other animals, and with plants, seeds, and agricultural implements for the cultivation of the new countries. Artificers of various trades were engaged, and a quantity of merchandise and gaudy trifles, fit for bartering with the natives, were placed on board. There was no need to press men into the service now; volunteers for the expedition were only too numerous. The fever for discovery was universal. Columbus was confident that he had been on the outskirts of Cathay, and that the scriptural land of Havilah, the home of gold, was not far off. Untold riches were to be acquired, and probably there was not one of the 1500 persons who took ship in the squadron that did not anticipate a prodigious fortune as the reward of the voyage. Nor was one of the great objects of

these discoveries uncared for. Twelve missionaries, eager to enlighten the spiritual darkness of the western lands, were placed under the charge of Bernard Buil, a Benedictine monk, who was specially appointed by the Pope, in order to ensure an authorised teaching of the faith, to superintend the religious education of the Indians. The instructions to Columbus, dated the 29th of May, 1493, are the first strokes upon that obdurate mass of colonial difficulty which at last, by incessant working of great princes, great churchmen, and great statesmen, was eventually to be hammered into some righteous form of wisdom and of mercy. In the course of these instructions, the admiral is ordered to labour in all possible ways to bring the dwellers in the Indies to a knowledge of the holy Catholic faith. And that this may the more easily be done, all the armada is to be charged to deal "lovingly" with the Indians; the admiral is to make them presents, and to "honour them much;" and if by chance any person or persons should treat the Indians ill, in any manner whatever, the admiral is to chastise such ill-doers severely.

Even at this early period of his administration, Fonseca appears to have made some attempts to thwart the admiral's wishes, attempts which Columbus, now at the zenith of royal favour, had no difficulty in baffling. As regards the household, for instance, Fonseca demurred to the number of footmen which the admiral proposed for his domestic establishment. The admiral appealed to the sovereigns, who allowed his claim, and reproved Fonseca for objecting.

CHAPTER VII

SECOND VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

On the 25th of September, all the preparations being complete, the squadron left Cadiz for the Canary Islands, and, after taking in provisions there, sailed from Ferro on the 13th of October. The voyage was singularly prosperous. There was but one storm, and that of not more than a few hours' duration; and favouring breezes wafted them over calm seas with a rapidity that brought the ships within sight of land on the 3rd of November, having made the voyage "by the goodness of God, and the wise management of the admiral, in as straight a track as if they had sailed by a well-known and frequented route." It was Sunday, and accordingly the name of Dominica was given to the first island to which the admiral came.

From Dominica, where no aborigines were found, the admiral stood northward, naming one small island Maria Galante, after his own flag-ship, and calling a second and much larger one Guadaloupe, after a certain monastery in Estramadura. This island was peopled by a race of cannibals; and, in the houses of the natives, human flesh was found roasting at the fire. An exploring party from one of the ships penetrated into the interior, but so thickly was it wooded that they lost their way in the jungle, and only regained the ships after four days' wanderings, and when their safety was despaired of by their companions, who feared that they had become food for the savages. Fortunately,

however, the men of the island were absent on some warlike expedition, and the white men only met with women and children in the course of their dangerous explorations.

Anxious to revisit the colony at La Navidad, the admiral proceeded north-westward as speedily as possible, and after passing and naming Montserrat, Antigua, St. Martin, and Santa Cruz, arrived at a beautiful and fertile island which he called St. John, but which has since received the name of Porto Rico. Here were found houses and roads constructed after a civilised fashion; but proofs that the inhabitants were cannibals abounded everywhere. On the 22nd of November the admiral reached the eastern end of Hispaniola, and sailed along the northern shore towards La Navidad, where a profound disappointment awaited him. The little colony which he had founded had been entirely destroyed. The fort was razed to the ground. Not one of the settlers was alive to tell the tale. The account which Guacanagari gave to Columbus, and which there seems no reason to doubt, is, that the Spaniards who had been left at La Navidad took to evil courses, quarrelled amongst themselves, straggled about the country, and finally were set upon, when weak and few in numbers, by a neighbouring Indian chief named Caonabó, who burned the tower and killed or dispersed the garrison, none of whom were ever discovered. It was in Caonabó's country that the gold mines were reported to exist, and it is probable that both the cupidity and the profligacy of the colonists were so gross as to draw down upon them the not unreasonable vengeance of the natives. Guacanagari, the friendly cacique, who had received the admiral amicably on his first voyage, declared that

he and his tribe had done their utmost in defence of the Europeans, in proof of which he exhibited recent wounds which had evidently been inflicted by savage weapons. He was, naturally, scarcely so friendly as before, but communication with him was made easy by the aid of one of the Indians whom Columbus had taken to Spain, and who acted as interpreter. Guacanagari was willing that a second fort should be built on the site of the first, but the admiral thought it better to seek a new locality, both because the position of the old fort had been unhealthy, and because the disgusting licentiousness of the settlers had offended the Indians to such an extent that whereas they had at first regarded the white men as angels from heaven, now they considered them as debased profligates and disturbers of the peace, against whom they had to defend their honour and their lives.

Sailing along the coast of Hayti, Columbus selected a site for his projected settlement, about forty miles to the east of the present Cape Haytein. This he called Isabella, after his royal mistress. Here the ships of his squadron discharged their stores, and the Spaniards laboured actively in the construction of the first town built by Europeans in the New World. But the work did not progress prosperously. Diseases prevailed among the colonists. The fatigues and discomforts of a long sea voyage were not the best preparations for hard physical labour. The number of men which the admiral had brought out with him was disproportionate to his means of sustaining them. Provisions and medicines began to fail. And, worst of all, none of the golden dreams were realised, under the influence of which they had left Spain. Only small samples of the precious metal

could be procured from the natives, and the vaguely indicated gold mines of Cibao had not been reached. Anxiety, responsibility, and labour began to tell upon the iron constitution of the admiral, and for some time he was stretched upon a bed of sickness.

Some idea of the difficulties which had to be encountered at this period may be conceived from an account of the state of his colony which Columbus sent home in January 1494. It is in the form of instructions to a certain Antonio de Torres, the Receiver of the Colony, who was to proceed to the court of Spain and inform the monarchs of such things as were written in these instructions, and doubtless to elucidate them by discourse, as in the present day we send a despatch to be read by an ambassador to the foreign minister of the power we are treating with. There remains a copy, made at the time, of this document, and of the notes in the margin containing the resolutions of the sovereigns. The original, thus noted, was taken back to Columbus. It is a most valuable document, very illustrative of the cautious and wise dealing of the Catholic sovereigns.

The document begins with the usual strain of complimentary address to great personages. "*Their Highnesses hold it for good service*" is the marginal remark.

The next paragraph consists of a general statement of the discoveries that have been made. "*Their Highnesses give much thanks to God, and hold as very honoured service all that the admiral has done.*"

Then follow the admiral's reasons why he has not been able to send home more gold. His people have been ill: it was necessary to keep guard, etc. "*He has done well*" is in the margin.

He suggests the building of a fortress near the place where gold can be got. Their Highnesses

approve; and the note in the margin is, "*This is well, and so it must be done.*"

Then comes a paragraph about provisions, and a marginal order from the sovereigns, "*that Juan de Fonseca is to provide for that matter.*"

Again, there comes another paragraph about provisions, complaining, amongst other things, that the casks, in which the wine for the armada had been put, were leaky. Their Highnesses make an order in the margin, "*that Juan de Fonseca is to find out the persons who played this cheat with the wine casks, and to make good from their pockets the loss, and to see that the canes*" (sugar canes for planting, possibly) "*are good, and that all that is here asked for, be provided immediately.*"

So far, nothing can run more pleasantly with the main document than the notes in the margin. Columbus now touches upon a matter which intimately concerns the subject of slavery. He desires his agent to inform their Highnesses that he has sent home some Indians from the Cannibal Islands as slaves, to be taught Castilian, and to serve afterwards as interpreters, so that the work of conversion may go on. His arguments in support of this proceeding are weighty. He speaks of the good that it will be to take these people away from cannibalism and to have them baptised, for so they will gain their souls, as he expresses it. Then, too, with regard to the other Indians, he remarks, "we shall have great credit from them, seeing that we can capture and make slaves of these cannibals, of whom they (the peaceable Indians) entertain so great a fear." Such arguments must be allowed to have much force in them; and it may be questioned whether many of those persons who, in these days, are the strongest

opponents of slavery, would then have had that perception of the impending danger of its introduction which the sovereigns appear to have entertained, from their answer to this part of the document. "*This is very well, and so it must be done; but let the admiral see whether it could not be managed there*" (*i.e.* in the Cannibal Islands) "*that they should be brought to our Holy Catholic Faith, and the same thing with the Indians of those islands where he is.*"

The admiral's despatch goes much further: in the next paragraph he boldly suggests that, for the advantage of the souls of these cannibal Indians, the more of them that could be taken the better; and that, considering what quantities of live-stock and other things are required for the maintenance of the colony, a certain number of caravels should be sent each year with these necessary things, and the cargoes be paid for in slaves taken from amongst the cannibals. He touches again on the good that will be done to the cannibals themselves; alludes to the customs duties that their Highnesses may levy upon them; and concludes by desiring Antonio de Torres to send, or bring, an answer, "because the preparations here (for capturing these cannibals) may be carried on with more confidence, if the scheme seem good to their Highnesses."

At the same time that we must do Columbus the justice to believe that his motives were right in his own eyes, it must be admitted that a more distinct suggestion for the establishment of a slave-trade was never proposed. To their honour, Ferdinand and Isabella thus replied: "*As regards this matter, it is suspended for the present, until there come some other way of doing it there, and let the admiral write what he thinks of this.*"

This is rather a confused answer, as often happens, when a proposition from a valued friend or servant is disapproved of, but has to be rejected kindly. The Catholic sovereigns would have been very glad to have received some money from the Indies: money was always welcome to King Ferdinand; the purchase of wine, seeds, and cattle for the colonists had hitherto proved anything but a profitable outlay; the prospect of conversion was probably dear to the hearts of both these princes, certainly to one of them: but still this proposition for the establishment of slavery was wisely and magnanimously set aside.

While Antonio de Torres was absent from Hispaniola, laying these propositions before Los Reyes, Columbus was busy about the affairs of the colony, which were in a most distracted state. Scant fare and hard work were having their effect; sickness pervaded the whole armament; and men of all ranks and stations, hidalgoes, people of the court and ecclesiastics, were obliged to labour manually under regulations strictly enforced. The rage and vexation of these men, many of whom had come out with the notion of finding gold ready for them on the sea shore, may be imagined; and complaints of the admiral's harsh way of dealing with those under him (probably no harsher than was absolutely necessary to save them), now took their rise, and pursued him ever after to his ruin. A mutiny, headed by Bernal Diaz, a man high in authority, was detected and quelled before the mutineers could effect their intention of seizing the ships. Diaz was sent for trial to Spain. The colonists, however, were somewhat cheered after a time by hearing of gold mines, and seeing specimens of ore brought from thence; and the admiral went himself and founded the Fort of St. Thomas, in the

mining district of Cibao. But the Spaniards gained very little real advantage from these gold mines, which they began to work before they had consolidated around them the means of living; in fact, dealing with the mines of Hispaniola as if they had been discovered in an old country, where the means of transit and supplies of provisions can, with certainty, be procured.

There was also another evil, besides that of inconsiderate mining, and, perhaps, quite as mischievous a one, which stood in the way of the steady improvement of these early Spanish colonies. The Catholic sovereigns had unfortunately impressed upon Columbus their wish that he should devote himself to further discovery, a wish but too readily adopted and furthered by his enterprising spirit. The hankering of the Spanish monarchs for further discovery was fostered by their jealousy of the Portuguese. The Portuguese were making their way towards India, going eastward. They, the Spaniards, thought they were discovering India, going westward. The more rapidly, therefore, each nation could advance and plant its standard, the more of much-coveted India it would hereafter be able to claim. Acting upon such views, Columbus now proceeded onwards, bent upon further discovery, notwithstanding that his little colonies at Isabella and St. Thomas must have needed all his sagacity to protect them, and all his authority to restrain them. He nominated a council to manage the government during his absence, with his brother Don Diego as president of it; he appointed a certain Don Pedro Margarite as captain-general; and then put to sea on the 24th of April, 1494.

CHAPTER VIII

ILLNESS—FURTHER DISCOVERIES—PLOTS AGAINST COLUMBUS

In the course of the voyage that then ensued, the admiral made many important discoveries, amongst them Jamaica, and the cluster of little islands called the "Garden of the Queen." The navigation amongst these islands was so difficult that the admiral is said to have been thirty-two days without sleeping. Certain it is, that after he had left the island called La Mona, and when he was approaching the island of San Juan, a drowsiness, which Las Casas calls "pestilential," but which might reasonably be attributed to the privations, cares, and anxieties which the admiral had now undergone for many months, seized upon him, and entirely deprived him for a time of the use of his senses.

The object in going to San Juan was to capture cannibals there, and Las Casas looks upon this lethargical attack as a judgment upon the admiral for so unjust a manner of endeavouring to introduce Christianity. The mariners turned the fleet homewards to Isabella, where they arrived the 29th of September, 1494, bearing with them their helpless commander.

On Columbus's arrival at Isabella, where he remained ill for five months, he found his brother, Bartholomew Columbus, whose presence gladdened him exceedingly. His brothers were very dear to

the admiral, as may be gathered from a letter to his eldest son Diego, in which he bids him make much of his brother Ferdinand, the son of Beatrice, "for," says he, "ten brothers would not be too many for you. I have never found better friends, on my right hand and on my left, than my brothers." Afterwards came Antonio de Torres with provisions and all things needful for the colony. But nothing, we are told, delighted the admiral so much as the despatches from court, for he was a faithful, loyal man, who loved to do his duty to those who employed him, and to have his faithfulness recognised. Peace or delight, however, was not at any time to be long enjoyed by Columbus. He found his colony in a sad state of disorganisation: the Indians were in arms against the Spaniards; and Father Buil, Don Pedro Margarite, and other principal persons had gone home to Spain in the ship which had brought Bartholomew Columbus.

The admiral, before his departure, had given a most injudicious command to Margarite, namely, to put himself at the head of four hundred men and go through the country, with the twofold object of impressing upon the natives a respect for the power of the Spaniards, and of freeing the colony from supporting these four hundred men. The instructions to Margarite were, to observe the people and the natural productions of the country through which he should pass; to do rigorous justice, so that the Spaniards should be prevented from injuring the Indians, or the Indians the Spaniards; to treat the Indians kindly; to obtain provisions by purchase, if possible, if not, by any other means; and to capture Caonabó and his brothers, either by force or artifice.

The proceedings of the men under Margarite were similar to those of the Spaniards formerly left at La Navidad. They went straggling over the country: they consumed the provisions of the poor Indians, astonishing them by their voracious appetites: waste, rapine, injury, and insult followed in their steps; and from henceforth there was but little hope of the two races living peaceably together in those parts, at least upon equal terms. The Indians were now swarming about the Spaniards with hostile intent: as a modern historian describes the situation, "they had passed from terror to despair;" and but for the opportune arrival of the admiral, the Spanish settlements in Hispaniola might again have been entirely swept away.

Caonabó, the cacique who, in former days, had put to death the garrison at La Navidad, was now threatening that of St. Thomas, the fort which the admiral had caused to be built in the mining district of Cibao. Guatignaná, the cacique of Macorix, who had killed eight Spanish soldiers and set fire to a house where there were forty ill, was now within two days' march of Isabella, besieging the fort of Magdalena. Columbus started up forthwith, went off to Magdalena, engaged the Indians, and routed them utterly. He took a large part of them for slaves, and reduced to obedience the whole of the province of Macorix. Returning to Isabella, he sent back, on the 24th of February, 1495, the four ships which Antonio de Torres had brought out, chiefly laden with Indian slaves. It is rather remarkable that the very ships which brought that admirable reply from Ferdinand and Isabella to Columbus, begging him to seek some other way to Christianity than through slavery, even for wild man-devouring Caribs, should

come back full of slaves taken from amongst the wild islanders of Hispaniola.

Caonabó, not daunted by the fate of Guatignaná, still continued to molest St. Thomas. The admiral accordingly sallied out with two hundred men against this cacique. On the broad plains of the Vega Real the Spaniards found an immense number of Indians collected together, amounting, it is said, to one hundred thousand men. The admiral divided his forces into two bands, giving the command of one to his brother Bartholomew, and leading the other himself; and when the brothers made an attack upon the Indians at the same time from different quarters, this numerous host was at once and utterly put to flight. In speaking of such a defeat, the modern reader must not be lavish of the words "cowardly," "pusillanimous," and the like, until, at least, he has well considered what it is to expose naked bodies to firearms, to the charge of steel-clad men on horseback, and to the clinging ferocity of bloodhounds. A "horrible carnage" ensued upon the flight of the Indians. Many of them, less fortunate, perhaps, than those who were slain, being taken alive, were condemned to slavery. Caonabó, however, who was besieging the fortress of St. Thomas at the time of the battle on the Vega Real, remained untaken. The admiral resolved to secure the person of this cacique by treachery, and sent Ojeda (who afterwards became a conspicuous actor in the sad drama of conquest and depopulation in the West Indies) to cajole Caonabó into coming to a friendly meeting. There are some curious instructions of Columbus's to Margarite in 1494, respecting a plot to take this formidable Caonabó. They are as thoroughly base and treacherous as can well be

imagined. This time the admiral's plan was completely successful.

The story which was current in the colonies, of the manner in which Ojeda captured the resolute Indian chief, is this. Ojeda carried with him gyves and manacles, the latter of the kind called by the Spaniards, somewhat satirically, *esposas* (wives), and all made of brass or steel, finely wrought and highly polished. The metals of Spain were prized by the Indians in the same way that the gold of the Indies was by the Spaniards. Moreover, amongst the Indians there was a strange rumour of talking brass, that arose from their listening to the church bell at Isabella, which, summoning the Spaniards to mass, was thought by the simple Indians to converse with them. Indeed the natives of Hispaniola held the Spanish metals in such estimation that they applied to them an Indian word, *Turey*, which seems to have signified anything that descends from heaven. When, therefore, Ojeda brought these ornaments to Caonabó, and told him they were Biscayan *Turey*, and that they were a great present from the admiral, and that he would show him how to put them on, and that when they were put on Caonabó should set himself on Ojeda's horse and be shown to his admiring subjects, as, Ojeda said, the kings of Spain were wont to show themselves to theirs, the incautious Indian is said to have fallen entirely into the trap. Going with Ojeda, accompanied by only a small escort, to a river a short distance from his main encampment, Caonabó, after performing ablutions, suffered the crafty young Spaniard to put the heaven-descended fetters on him, and to set him upon the horse. Ojeda himself got up behind the Indian prince, and then whirling a few times round, like a

pigeon before it takes its determined flight, making the followers of Caonabó imagine that this was but display (they all the while keeping at a respectful distance from the horse, an animal they much dreaded), he darted off for Isabella, and after great fatigues, now keeping to the main track, now traversing the woods in order to evade pursuit, brought Caonabó bound into the presence of Columbus. The unfortunate cacique was afterwards sent to Spain[1] to be judged there; and his forces were presently put to flight by a troop of Spaniards under the command of this same Ojeda. Some were killed; some taken prisoners; some fled to the forests and the mountains; some yielded, "offering themselves to the service of the Christians, if they would allow them to live in their own ways."

Never, perhaps, were little skirmishes, for such they were on the part of the Spaniards, of greater permanent importance than those above narrated, which took place in the early part of the year 1495. They must be looked upon as the origin in the Indies of slavery, vassalage, and the system of *repartimientos*. We have seen that the admiral, after his first victory, sent off four ships with slaves to Spain. He now took occasion to impose a tribute upon the whole population of Hispaniola. It was thus arranged. Every Indian above fourteen years old, who was in the provinces of the mines, or near to these provinces, was to pay every three months a little bellful of gold; all other persons in the island were to pay at the same time an *arroba* of cotton for each person. Certain brass or copper tokens were made—different ones for each tribute time—and were given to the Indians when they paid tribute;

[1] He died on the voyage, however.

and these tokens, being worn about their necks, were to show who had paid tribute. A remarkable proposal was made upon this occasion to the admiral by Guarionex, cacique of the Vega Real, namely, that he would institute a huge farm for the growth of corn and the manufacture of bread, stretching from Isabella to St. Domingo (*i.e.* from sea to sea), which would suffice to maintain all Castile with bread. The cacique would do this on condition that his vassals were not to pay tribute in gold, as they did not know how to collect that. But this proposal was not accepted, because Columbus wished to have tribute in such things as he could send over to Spain.

This tribute is considered to have been a most unreasonable one in point of amount, and Columbus was obliged to modify his demands upon these poor Indians, and in some instances to change the nature of them. It appears that, in 1496, service instead of tribute was demanded of certain Indian villages; and as the villagers were ordered to make (and work) the farms in the Spanish settlements, this may be considered as the beginning of the system of *repartimientos*, or *encomiendas*, as they were afterwards called.

We must not, however, suppose that Indian slavery would not have taken place by means of Columbus, even if these uprisings and defeats of the Indians in the course of the year 1495 had never occurred. Very early indeed we see what the admiral's views were with regard to the Indians. In the diary which he kept of his first voyage, on the 14th of October, three days after discovering the New World, he describes a position which he thinks would be a very good one for a fort; and he goes on to say, "I do not think that it (the fort)

will be necessary, for this people is very simple in the use of arms (as your highnesses will see from seven of them that I have taken in order to bring them to you, to learn our language and afterwards to take them back); so that when your highnesses command, you can have them all taken to Castile or kept in the island as captives."

Columbus was not an avaricious, nor a cruel man; and certainly he was a very pious one; but early in life he had made voyages along the coast of Africa, and he was accustomed to a slave trade. Moreover, he was anxious to reduce the expenses of these Indian possessions to the Catholic sovereigns, to prove himself in the right as to all he had said respecting the advantages that would flow to Spain from the Indies, and to confute his enemies at court.

Those who have read the instructions to Columbus given by the Catholic monarchs will naturally be curious to know how the news of the arrival of these vessels laden with slaves, the fruit of the admiral's first victory over the Indians, was received by the sovereigns, recollecting how tender they had been about slavery before. This, however, was a very different case from the former one. Here were people taken in what would be called rebellion—prisoners of war. Still we find that Ferdinand and Isabella were heedful in their proceedings in this matter. There is a letter of theirs to Bishop Fonseca, who managed Indian affairs, telling him to withhold receiving the money for the sale of these Indians that Torres had brought with him until their highnesses should be able to inform themselves from men learned in the law, theologians and canonists, whether with a good conscience these Indians could be ordered to be sold or not. The historian Muñoz,

who has been indefatigable in his researches amongst the documents relating to Spanish America, declares that he cannot find that the point was decided; and if he has failed, we are not likely to discover any direct evidence about the decision. We shall hereafter, however, find something which may enable us to conjecture what the decision practically came to be.

Many of the so-called free Indians in Hispaniola had, perhaps, even a worse fate than that which fell to the lot of their brethren condemned to slavery. These free men, seeing the Spaniards quietly settling down in their island, building houses, and making forts, and no vessels in the harbour of Isabella to take them away, fell into the profoundest sadness, and bethought them of the desperate remedy of attempting to starve the Spaniards out, by not sowing or planting anything. But this is a shallow device, when undertaken on the part of the greater number, in any country, against the smaller. The scheme reacted upon themselves. They had intended to gain a secure though scanty sustenance in the forests and upon the mountains; but though the Spaniards suffered bitterly from famine, they were only driven by it to further pursuit and molestation of the Indians, who died in great numbers, of hunger, sickness, and misery.

About this period there arrived in the Indies from the court of Spain a commissioner of inquiry, his mission being doubtless occasioned by the various complaints made against the admiral by Father Buil, Margarite, and the Spaniards who had returned from Hispaniola. The name of this commissioner was Juan Aguado, and his powers were vouched for by the following letter from the sovereigns:—

"The King and the Queen.

"Cavaliers, Esquires and other persons, who by our command are in the Indies: we send you thither Juan Aguado, our Gentleman of the Chamber, who will speak to you on our part: we command that you give him faith and credence.

"I the King: I the Queen.

"By command of the King and Queen, our Lords.

"HERNAND ALVAREZ.

"Madrid, the ninth of April, one thousand four hundred and ninety-five."

The royal commissioner arrived at Isabella in October, 1495, and his proceedings in the colony, together with the fear of what he might report on his return, quickened the admiral's desire to return to court, that he might fight his own battles there himself. For the tide of his fortune was turning, and this appeared by several notable signs. Strong as was the confidence which the sovereigns reposed in him, the representations of Margarite and Buil—the rough soldier and the wily Benedictine—had produced their effect. They complained of the despotic rule of Columbus; of the disregard of distinctions of rank which he had manifested by placing the hidalgoes on the same footing as the common men, as regards work and rations, during the construction of the settlement; and of his mania for discovery, which made him abandon the colony already formed, in the unremunerative search for new countries. The commissioner who was sent to investigate these charges, as well as to report on the condition of the colony, found no difficulty in collecting evidence to substantiate them. An unsuccessful man is generally persuaded that some-

body else has caused his failure. And the "somebody else," in the case of the colonists, was, by universal consent, the foreign sea-captain who had deluded Spanish hidalgoes by his wild projects, and had become a grandee under false pretences. The Indians, too, who were glad to lay their miseries at the door of somebody, and who were told that Aguado was the new admiral, and had come to supplant the old one, were not slow to add their quota to the charges against Columbus. To rebut these accusations, as well as to protest against the issue of licences, to private adventurers, to trade in the new countries independently of the admiral (a measure which, in violation of Columbus's charter, had lately been adopted by Fonseca), he quitted Isabella on the 10th of March, 1496, in the *Niña*, while Aguado took ship in another caravel. Many of the colonists, who had been rudely awakened from their golden dreams, seized this opportunity of returning to Spain; and the Cacique Caonabó was also on board, probably with a view of impressing upon him an overwhelming conviction of Spanish power, and of the futility of any efforts to resist it.

The voyage was a miserable one. Contrary winds prevailed until provisions began to run short, and rations were doled out in pittances which grew scantier and scantier until all the admiral's authority was needed to prevent his ravenous shipmates from killing and eating the Caribs who were on board—in retribution, so ran the grim jest, for their cannibalism. At last, when famine was imminent, after a voyage of three months' duration, the two caravels entered the Bay of Cadiz on the 11th of June, 1496. After about a month's delay, Columbus received a summons to proceed to the court, which was then

at Burgos. In the course of his journey thither he adopted the same means of dazzling the eyes of the populace, by the display of gold and the exhibition of his captives, as on his return from his first voyage; but so many unsuccessful colonists had returned, sick at heart and ruined in health, to tell the tale of failure to their countrymen, that this triumphal procession was very unlike the last as regards the welcome accorded by the public. However, the sovereigns seem to have given the admiral a kind reception, and instead of placing him on his defence against the charges which had been brought forward by Father Buil, they listened with sympathy to his story of the difficulties which had beset him, and heard with sanguine satisfaction of the recent discovery of the mines from which it was said that the natives procured most of the gold that had been found in their possession, and which promised an incalculably rich harvest. Presently, in apparent confirmation of this belief, one Pedro Nino, a captain of the admiral's, announced his arrival at Cadiz, with a quantity of "gold in bars" on board his ship. It was not until great expectations had been raised at court, and the wildest ideas conceived of the magnitude of this supposed first instalment of the riches of the newly found gold mines, that it turned out that this Nino was merely a miserable maker of jokes, and that the "gold *in bars*" was only represented by the Indians who composed his cargo, whose present captivity was secured by "bars," and whose future sale was to furnish gold. This absurdity naturally caused Columbus and his friends no slight mortification, and added a fresh weapon to the shafts of ridicule which his enemies were for ever launching at his extravagant theories and his expensive projects.

CHAPTER IX

CRIMINALS SENT TO THE INDIES—REPARTIMIENTOS—INSURRECTION

During the two years that elapsed from the admiral's leaving Hispaniola in 1496 to his return there in 1498, many things happened on both sides the Atlantic which need recording. In 1496, we find that Don Bartholomew Columbus sent to Spain three hundred slaves from Hispaniola. He had previously informed the sovereigns that certain caciques were killing the Castilians, and their highnesses had given orders in reply, that all those who should be found guilty should be sent to Spain. If this meant the common Indians as well as the caciques, then it seems probable that the question about selling them with a safe conscience was already decided.

In 1497, two very injudicious edicts were published by the Catholic sovereigns, upon the advice, as we are told, of Columbus; one authorising the judges to transport criminals to the Indies; the other giving an indulgence to all those who had committed any crime (with certain exceptions, among which heresy, *lèse majesté*, and treason find a place) to go out at their own expense to Hispaniola, and to serve for a certain time under the orders of the admiral. The remembrance of this advice on his part might well have shamed Columbus from saying, as he did three years afterwards, in his most emphatic manner, "I swear that numbers of men have gone to the

Indies who did not deserve water from God or man." It is but fair, however, to mention that Las Casas, speaking of the colonists who went out under these conditions, says, "I have known some of them in these islands, even of those who had lost their ears, whom I always found sufficiently honest men."

In 1497, letters patent were issued from the sovereigns to the admiral, authorising him to grant *repartimientos* of the lands in the Indies to the Spaniards. It is noticeable that in this document there is no mention of Indians, so that they had not come to form portion of a *repartimiento* at this period. The document in question is of a formal character, expressed in the style of legal documents of the present day, by virtue of which the fortunate Spaniard who gets the land is "to have, and to hold, and to possess," and so forth; and is enabled "to sell and to give, and to present, and to traffic with, and to exchange, and to pledge, and to alienate, and to do with it and in it all that he likes or may think good."

While the acts of legislation above narrated, which cannot be said to have been favourable to good government in the Indies, were being framed at the court of Spain, Don Bartholomew Columbus was doing much in his administration of Hispaniola that led to very mischievous results.

Before the admiral left the island, he had discovered some mines to the southward, and had thought of choosing a port in their vicinity, where he might establish a colony. He had spoken about this in his letters to the government at home. As he entered the Bay of Cadiz on his return, he met some vessels there which were bound for Hispaniola, and

which contained letters from their Highnesses approving of his suggestion. By these ships, therefore, he sent orders to his brother to make this southern settlement; and the "Adelantado" accordingly proceeded southwards, and fixed upon a port at the entrance of the river Ozama. He sent for artisans from Isabella, and commenced building a fortress, which he called St. Domingo, and which afterwards became the chief port of the island.

There was one part of Hispaniola into which the Spaniards had not yet penetrated: it was called Xaragua, and was reigned over by a cacique named Bohechio, whose sister, Anacaona, the wife of Caonabó, and a noted beauty, seems also to have had much authority in those parts. The Adelantado, after seeing the works at St. Domingo commenced, resolved to enter the kingdom of Xaragua, whither he proceeded at the head of one hundred men. Arriving at the river Neyba, he found an immense army of Indians drawn up there to oppose his progress. Don Bartholomew made signs to them that his errand was peaceful; and the good-natured Indians accepting his proffers of amity, he was conducted some thirty leagues further to the city of Xaragua, where he was received with processions of dancing and singing women, and feasted magnificently. After having been well entertained by these Indians, the Adelantado proceeded to business, and, in plain terms, demanded tribute of them. Bohechio pleaded that there was no gold in his dominions, to which the Adelantado replied that he did not wish to impose tribute upon any people, except of the natural productions to be found in their country. It was finally settled that Bohechio should pay tribute in cotton and cazabi-bread. He

acceded to this agreement very willingly; and the Adelantado and this cacique parted on the most friendly terms.

Don Bartholomew then returned to Isabella, where he found that about three hundred men had died from disease, and that there was great dearth of provisions. He distributed the sick men in his fortresses, and in the adjacent Indian villages, and afterwards set out on a journey to his new fort of St. Domingo, collecting tribute by the way. In all these rapid and energetic proceedings of the Adelantado, and still more from causes over which he had no control, the Spaniards must have suffered much; and, doubtless, those complaints on their part, which were soon to break out very menacingly, were not unheard at the present time.

If the Spaniards, however, complained of the labours which Don Bartholomew imposed upon them, the Indians complained still more, and far more justly, of the tribute imposed upon them. Several of the minor chiefs, upon this occasion of collecting tribute, complained to the great Cacique Guarionex, and suggested a rising of the Indians. This cacique seems to have been a peaceful, prudent man, and well aware of the power of the Spaniards. But he now consented to place himself at the head of an insurrection, which, however, the lieutenant-governor, soon made aware of it, quelled at once by a battle in which he was victorious over Guarionex, taking him and other principal persons captive. The chief movers of the revolt were put to death; but Guarionex was delivered up to his people, who flocked by thousands to his place of imprisonment, clamouring for his restitution.

About this time messengers came from Bohechio

and Anacaona, informing the Adelantado that the tribute of that country was ready for him, and he accordingly went to fetch it. During his absence from the seat of government, and under the less vigorous administration of Don Diego Columbus, who had been left at the head of affairs at Isabella, those discontents among the Spaniards, which had no doubt been rife for a long time, broke out in a distinct manner. I allude to the well-known insurrection of Roldan, whom the admiral, on his departure, had left as chief justice in the island. The disputes between the chief justice and the governor were to form the first of a series of similar proceedings to take place afterwards in many colonies even down to our own times. It may be imagined that the family of Columbus were a hard race to deal with; and any one observing that the admiral was very often engaged in disputes, and almost always in the right, might conjecture that he was one of those persons who pass through life proving that all people about them are wrong, and going a great way to make them so. This would have been an easy mode of explaining many things, and therefore very welcome to a narrator, but it would not be at all just towards Columbus to saddle upon him any such character. Here were men who had come out with very grand expectations, and who found themselves pinched with hunger, having dire storms to encounter, and vast labours to undergo; who were restrained within due bounds by no pressure of society; who were commanded by a foreigner, or by members of his family, whom they knew to have many enemies at court; who thought that the sovereigns themselves could scarcely reach them at this distance; and who imagined that they had

worked themselves out of all law and order, and that they deserved an Alsatian immunity. With such men (many of them, perhaps, "not worthy of water") the admiral and his brothers had to get useful works of all kinds done; and did contrive to get vessels navigated, forts built, and some ideas of civilisation maintained. But it was an arduous task at all times: and this Roldan did not furnish the least of the troubles which the admiral and his brothers had to endure.

Roldan, too, if we could hear him, would probably have something to say. He wished, it appears, to return to Spain, as Father Buil and Margarite had done; and urged that a certain caravel which the Governor Don Bartholomew Columbus had built might be launched for that purpose. Such is the account of Ferdinand Columbus, who maintains that the said caravel could not be launched for want of tackle. He also mentions that Roldan complained of the restless life the Adelantado led his men, building forts and towns; and said that there was no hope of the admiral coming back to the colony with supplies. Without going into these squabbles—and indeed it is very difficult when a quarrel of this kind arises, taking it up at the point where it breaks out, to judge it upon that only, since the stream of ill-will may have run underground for a long time—suffice it to say that Roldan and his men grew more and more insubordinate; were not at all quelled by the presence of the Adelantado on his return from Xaragua; and finally quitted Isabella in a body. The Adelantado contrived to keep some men faithful to him, promising them, amongst other things, two slaves each. Negotiations then took place between the Adelantado and Roldan, which must be omitted

for the present, to enter upon the further dealing of Don Bartholomew with the Indians.

These poor islanders were now harassed both by the rebels and by the loyal Spaniards, whom the Adelantado could not venture to curb much, for fear of their going over to the other party. The Indians were also tempted by Roldan to join him, as he contended that tribute had been unjustly imposed upon them. From all these difficulties, Guarionex made his escape by flying to the territories of Maiobanex, the cacique of a hardy race, who inhabited the hilly country towards Cabron. This flight of Guarionex was a very serious affair, as it threatened the extinction of tribute in that cacique's territory; and Don Bartholomew accordingly pursued the fugitive. After some skirmishes with the troops of Maiobanex, in which, as usual, the Spaniards were victorious, the Adelantado sent a messenger to Maiobanex, telling him that the Spaniards did not seek war with him, but that he must give up Guarionex, otherwise his own territory would be destroyed by fire and sword. Maiobanex replied, that every one knew that Guarionex was a good man, endowed with all virtue, wherefore he judged him to be worthy of assistance and defence, but that they, the Spaniards, were violent and bad men, and that he would have neither friendship nor commerce with them.

Upon receiving this answer, the Adelantado burnt several villages, and approached nearer to the camp of Maiobanex. Fresh negotiations were entered into: Maiobanex convoked an assembly of his people; and they contended that Guarionex ought to be given up, and cursed the day when first he came amongst them. Their noble chief, however, said,

"that Guarionex was a good man, and deserved well at his hands, for he had given him many royal gifts when he came to him, and had taught him and his wife to join in choral songs and to dance, of which he made no little account, and for which he was grateful: wherefore, he would be party to no treaty to desert Guarionex, since he had fled to him, and he had pledged himself to take care of the fugitive; and would rather suffer all extremities than give detractors a cause for speaking ill, to say that he had delivered up his guest." The assemblage of the people being dismissed, Maiobanex informed his guest that he would stand by him to the last.

The fugitive cacique, however, finding that Maiobanex's people were ill-disposed towards him, quitted, of his own accord, their territory; but by so doing, he was not enabled to save his generous host, who, with his family, was surprised and taken; and Guarionex himself being shortly afterwards captured and put in chains at Fort Concepçion, the two caciques probably shared the same prison. Thus concludes a story which, if it had been written by some Indian Plutarch, and the names had been more easy to pronounce, might have taken its just place amongst the familiar and household stories which we tell our children, to make them see the beauty of great actions.

CHAPTER X

COLUMBUS'S THIRD VOYAGE

A GOOD starting-point for that important part of the narrative which comes next—namely, the discovery of the American continent by Columbus—will be a recital of the first clause in the instructions given by Ferdinand and Isabella to the admiral, in the year 1497, previously to his undertaking his third voyage—a voyage which, though not to be compared to his first one, is still very memorable on account of the discoveries he made and the sufferings he experienced in the course of it.

The first clause of the instructions is to the effect that the Indians of the islands are to be brought into peace and quietude, being reduced into subjection "benignantly;" and also, as the principal end of the conquest, that they be converted to the sacred Catholic faith, and have the holy sacraments administered to them.

It will be needless to recount the vexations of that "much-enduring man," Columbus, before his embarkation. Suffice it to say, that he set sail from the port of San Lucar on the 30th of May, 1498, with six vessels and two hundred men, in addition to the sailors that were necessary to navigate the vessels. In the course of his voyage he was obliged to avoid a French squadron which was cruising in those seas, as France and Spain were then at war. From Gomera, one of the Canary islands, he despatched

three of his ships directly to Hispaniola, declaring in his instructions to their commanders that he was going to the Cape Verde islands, and thence, "in the name of the Sacred Trinity," intended to navigate to the south of those islands, until he should arrive under the equinoctial line, in the hope of being "guided by God to discover something which may be to His service, and to that of our lords, the king and queen, and to the honour of Christendom;" "for I believe," he adds, "that no one has ever traversed this way, and that this sea is nearly unknown."

With one ship, therefore, and two caravels, the great admiral made for the Cape Verde islands, "a false name," as he observes, for nothing was to be seen there of a green colour. He reached these islands on the 27th of June, and quitted them on the 4th of July, having been in the midst of such a dense fog all the time, that, he says, "it might have been cut with a knife." Thence he proceeded to the south-west, intending afterwards to take a westerly direction. When he had gone, as he says, one hundred and twenty leagues, he began to find those floating fields of seaweed which he had encountered in his first voyage. Here he took an observation at nightfall, and found that the north star was in five degrees.[1] The wind suddenly abated, and the heat was intolerable; so much so, that nobody dared to go below deck to look after the wine and the provisions. This extraordinary heat lasted eight days. The first day was clear, and if the others had been like it, the admiral says, not a man would have been left alive, but they would all have been burnt up.

At last a favourable breeze sprang up, enabling the admiral to take a westerly course, the one he

[1] See Notes.

most desired, as he had before noticed in his voyages to the Indies that about a hundred miles west of the Azores there was always a sudden change of temperature.[1] On Sunday, the 22nd of July, in the evening, the sailors saw innumerable birds going from the south-west to the north-east, which flight of birds was a sign that land was not far off. For several successive days birds were seen, and an albatross perched upon the admiral's vessel. Still the fleet went on without seeing land, and, as it was in want of fresh water, the admiral was thinking of changing his course, and, indeed, on Thursday, the 31st of July, had commenced steering northwards for some hours, when, to use his own words, "as God had always been accustomed to show mercy to him," a certain mariner of Huelva, a follower of the admiral's, named Alonzo Perez, happened to go up aloft upon the maintop-sail of the admiral's ship, and suddenly saw land towards the south-west, about fifteen leagues off. This land which he described was in the form of three lofty hills or mountains. It would be but natural to conjecture that, as Columbus had resolved to name the first land he should discover "Trinidad," it was by an effort of the will, or of the imagination, that these three eminences were seen first; but it is exceedingly probable that such eminences were to be seen from the point whence Alonzo Perez first saw land.[2]

The sailors sang the *Salve Regina*, with other

[1] I suppose he came into or out of one of those warm ocean rivers which have so great an effect in modifying the temperature of the earth—perhaps into the one which comes from the south of Africa through the Gulf of Mexico to our own shores, and on which we so much depend.

[2] Cape Cashepou is backed by three peaked mountains, of which a representation is given in Day's *West Indies*, vol. ii. p. 31.

pious hymns in honour of God and "Our Lady," according to the custom of the mariners of Spain, who, in terror or in joy, were wont to find an expression for their feelings in such sacred canticles.

The admiral's course, when he was going northwards, had been in the direction of the Carib islands, already well known to him; but with great delight he now turned towards Trinidad, making for a cape, which, from the likeness of a little rocky islet near it to a galley in full sail, he named "La Galera."[1] There he arrived "at the hour of complines," but, not finding the port sufficiently deep for his vessels to enter, he proceeded westwards.

The first thing noticeable as he neared these shores, was that the trees grew well on the margin of the sea. There were houses and people—and very beautiful lands, which reminded him, from their beauty and their verdure, of the gardens of Valencia as seen in the month of March. It was also to be observed that these lands were well cultivated.

On the following morning he continued in a westerly direction in search of a port where he might take in water and refit his ships, the timber of which had shrunk, from extreme heat, so that they sadly needed caulking. He did not find a port, but came to deep soundings somewhere near Point Alcatraz, where he brought to, and took in fresh water. This was on a Wednesday, the 1st of August. From the point where he now was, the low lands of the Orinoco must have been visible, and Columbus must have beheld the continent of America for the first time.[2]

[1] This point is sometimes placed at the north-east of Trinidad; but wrongly so. It is now Cape Galeota.—*See* Humboldt's *Examen Critique*, vol. i. p. 310.

[2] The northern part of the continent had been discovered by Sebastian Cabot on the 24th of June, 1497.

He supposed it to be an island of about twenty leagues in extent, and he gave it the somewhat insignificant name of Zeta.

The same signs of felicity which greeted his eyes on his first sight of land continued to manifest themselves. Farms and populous places[1] were visible above the water as he coasted onwards; with the trees flourishing close to the sea—a sure sign of the general mildness of the weather, wherever it occurs.

The next day he proceeded westwards along the southern part of Trinidad, until he arrived at the westernmost point, which he called "La punta de Arenal;" and now he beheld the Gulf of Paria, which he called "La Balena" (the gulf of the whale). It was just after the rainy season, and the great rivers which flow into that gulf were causing its waters to rush with impetuosity out of the two openings[2] which lead into the open sea. The contest between the fresh water and the salt water produced a ridge of waters, on the top of which the admiral was borne into the gulf at such risk, that, writing afterwards of this event to the Spanish court, he says, "Even to-day I shudder lest the waters should have upset the vessel when they came under its bows."

Previously to entering the gulf, the admiral had sought to make friends with some Indians who approached him in a large canoe, by ordering his men to come upon the poop, and dance to the sound of a tambourine; but this, naturally enough, appears to have been mistaken for a warlike demonstration,

[1] "Vido muchas labranzas por luengo de Costa y muchas Poblaciones."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. i. cap. 132.

[2] The Boca del Drago and the Boca de la Sierpe.

and it was answered by a flight of arrows from the Indians.

The admiral, still supposing that he was amongst islands, called the land to the left of him, as he moved up the gulf, the island of Gracia; and he continued to make a similar mistake throughout the whole of his course up the gulf, taking the various projections of the indented coast for islands. Throughout his voyage in the gulf, Columbus met with nothing but friendly treatment from the natives. At last he arrived at a place which the natives told him was called Paria, and where they also informed him that, to the westward, the country was more populous. He took four of these natives, and went onwards, until he came to a point which he named "Punto de Aguja" (Needle Point), where, he says, he found the most beautiful lands in the world, very populous, and whence, to use his own words, "an infinite number of canoes came off to the ships."

Proceeding onwards, the admiral came to a place where the women had pearl bracelets, and, on his inquiring where these came from, they made signs, directing him out of the Gulf of Paria towards the island of Cubagua. Here he sent some of his men on shore, who were very well received and entertained by two of the principal Indians. It is needless to dwell upon this part of the narrative. Very few of the places retain the names which the admiral gave them, and, consequently, it is difficult to trace his progress. He began to conjecture, from the immense amount of fresh water brought down by the rivers into the Gulf of Paria, that the land which he had been calling the island of Gracia was not an island but a continent, of which fact he afterwards became more convinced. But little time was given

him for research of any kind. He was anxious to reach Hispaniola, in order to see after his colonists there, and to bring them the stores which he had in charge; and so, after passing through the " Boca del Drago," and reconnoitring the island of Margarita, which he named, he was compelled to go on his way to Hispaniola. We are hardly so much concerned with what the admiral saw and heard, as with what he afterwards thought and reported. To understand this, it will be desirable to enter somewhat into the scientific questions which occupied the mind of this great mariner and most observant man.

The discovery of the continent of America by Columbus, in his third voyage, was the result of a distinct intention on his part to discover some new land, and cannot be attributed to chance. It would be difficult to define precisely the train of ideas which led Columbus to this discovery. The Portuguese navigations were one compelling cause. Then the change, already alluded to, which Columbus had noticed in his voyages to the Indies, on passing a line a hundred leagues west of the Azores, was in his mind, as it was in reality, a circumstance of great moment [1] and significance. It was not a change of temperature alone that he noticed, but a change in the heavens, the air, the sea, and the magnetic current.

In the first place, the needles of the compass, instead of north-easting, north-wested at this line; and that remarkable phenomenon occurred just upon

[1] It is the opinion of Humboldt, as mentioned before, that the celebrated division, made by Alexander the Sixth between the Castilian and Portuguese monarchs, was adopted in reference to these phenomena which Columbus had noticed; and, if the line of no variation were a " constant," no better marine boundary could well be suggested.

the passage of the line, as if, Columbus says, one passed a hill. Then, the sea there was full of sea-weed like small pine-branches, laden with a fruit similar to pistachio nuts. Moreover, on passing this imaginary line, the admiral had invariably found that the temperature became agreeable and the sea calm. Accordingly, in the course of this voyage, when they were suffering from that great heat which has been mentioned, he determined to take a westerly course, which led, as we have seen, to his discovering the beautiful land of Paria.[1]

Now Columbus was one of those men of divining minds, who must have general theories on which to thread their observations; and, as few persons have so just a claim to theorise as those who have added largely to the number of ascertained facts (a privilege which they generally make abundant use of), so Columbus may well be listened to when propounding his explanation of the wonderful change in sea, air, sky, and magnetic current, which he discerned at this distance of a hundred leagues from the Azores.

His theory was that the earth was not a perfect sphere, but pear-shaped; and he thought that, as he proceeded westwards in this voyage, the sea went gradually rising, and his ships rising too, until they came nearer to the heavens. It is very possible that this theory had been long in his mind, or, at any rate, that he held it before he reached the coast of Paria. When there, new facts struck his mind, and were com-

[1] Las Casas, who had other authentic information about this voyage besides the manuscripts of Columbus, says that the admiral intended to have gone southwards, after he had taken a westerly course, on quitting the place where he was becalmed. Had he done so, which the state of his ships would not permit, he might have been the discoverer of Brazil.

bined with his theory. He found the temperature much more moderate than might have been expected so near the equinoctial line, far more moderate than on the opposite coast of Africa. In the evenings, indeed, it was necessary for him to wear an outer garment of fur. Then the natives were lighter coloured, more astute, and braver than those of the islands. Their hair, too, was different.

Then, again, he meditated upon the immense volume of fresh waters which descended into the Gulf of Paria. And, in fine, the conclusion which his pious mind came to was that, when he reached the land which he called the island of Gracia, he was at the base of the earthly Paradise. He also, upon reflection, concluded that it was a continent which he had discovered, the same continent of the east which he had always been in search of; and that the waters, which we now know to be a branch of the river Orinoco, formed one of the four great rivers which descended from the garden of Paradise.

Very different were the conjectures of the pilots. Some said that they were in the Sea of Spain, others in that of Scotland, and, being in despair about their whereabouts, they concluded that they had been under the guidance of the Devil. The admiral, however, was not a man to be much influenced by the sayings of the unthoughtful and the unlearned. He fortified himself by references to St. Isidro, Beda, Strabo, St. Ambrose, and Duns Scotus, and held stoutly to the conclusion that he had discovered the site of the earthly Paradise. It is said that he exclaimed to his men that they were in the richest country in the world.

Columbus did not forget to claim, with all due formalities, the possession of this approach to

Paradise for his employers, the Catholic sovereigns. Accordingly, when at Paria, he had landed and taken possession of the coast in their names, erecting a great cross upon the shore, which, he tells Ferdinand and Isabella, he was in the habit of doing at every headland, the religious aspect of the conquest being one which always had great influence with the admiral, as he believed it to have with the Catholic monarchs. In communicating this discovery, he reminds them how they bade him go on with the enterprise if he should discover only stones and rocks, and had told him that they counted the cost for nothing, considering that the Faith would be increased and their dominions widened.

It was, however, no poor discovery of mere "rocks and stones" which the admiral had now made. It will be interesting to see his first impressions of the men and the scenery of this continent which he had now, unconsciously, for the first time, discovered. He says, "I found some lands, the most beautiful in the world, and very populous." The lands in the island of Trinidad he had previously compared to Valencia, in Spain, during the month of March. It is also noticeable that he had observed that the fields were cultivated. Of the people, he says, "They are all of good stature, well made, and of very graceful bearing, with much and smooth hair;" and he mentions that on their heads they wore the beautiful Arab head-dress (called *keffeh*), made of worked and coloured handkerchiefs, which appeared in the distance as if they were silken.

The description given by Columbus of the natives whom he encounters in his voyages is almost always favourable. Indeed, the description of any man or thing depends as much on the person describing,

as on the thing or person described. Those little differences in look or dress, which excite the ready mockery of the untravelled rustic, appear very slight indeed to the man who, like Columbus or Las Casas, has seen many lands and travelled over many minds. The rude Spanish common soldier perceived a far greater difference between himself and the Indian than did the most accomplished man who visited the Indies when he made to himself a similar comparison. Occasionally, in a narrow nature, however cultivated, the commonest prejudices hold their ground; but, in general, knowledge sees behind and beyond disgust, and suffices to conquer it.

Columbus, however, found the men, the country, and the products equally admirable. It is somewhat curious that he does not mention his discovery of pearls to the Catholic monarchs, and he afterwards makes a poor excuse for this. The real reason I conjecture to have been a wish to preserve this knowledge to himself, that the fruits of this enterprise might not be prematurely snatched from him. His shipmates, however, were sure to disperse the intelligence; and the gains to be made on the Pearl Coast were, probably, the most tempting bait for future navigators to follow in the track of Columbus, and complete the discovery of the earthly Paradise.

Of the delights of this Paradise Columbus himself was to have but a slight and mocking foretaste. He had been constantly ill during the voyage, suffering from the gout and from an inflammation in his eyes which rendered him almost blind. His new colony in Hispaniola demanded his attention, and must often have been the cause of anxious thought to him; and the grave but glowing enthusiast made his way to St. Domingo, and afterwards returned to Spain,

to be vexed henceforth by those mean miseries and small disputes which afflicted him for the remainder of his days—miseries the more galling, as they were so disproportionately small in comparison with the greatness of such a man, and with the aims and hopes which they effectually hindered.

CHAPTER XI

ARRIVAL AT HISPANIOLA—BAD TREATMENT BY BOBADILLA

It was on the 30th of August, 1498, that Columbus arrived at Hispaniola, where he found the state of his colony far from cheering, the defection of Roldan and his followers having put everything into confusion. The admiral supposed at first that the enmity of Roldan's party was chiefly directed against his brother, the Adelantado, and he hoped that, now he had arrived, some agreement would speedily be concluded with Roldan, of which he might inform the Catholic sovereigns by the vessels which he purposed to send back immediately to Spain. This was very far, however, from being the case. These vessels, five in number, left the port of St. Domingo bearing no good news of peace and amity amongst the Spaniards, but laden with many hundreds of Indian slaves, which had been taken in the following manner. Some cacique failed to perform the personal services imposed upon him and his people, and fled to the forests; upon which, orders were given to pursue him, and a large number of slaves were captured and put into these ships. Columbus, in his letters to the sovereigns, enters into an account of the pecuniary advantage that will arise from these slave-dealing transactions, and from the sale of logwood. He estimates that, "in the name of the sacred Trinity," there may be sent

as many slaves as sale could be found for in Spain, and that the value of the slaves, for whom there would be a demand to the number of four thousand, as he calculated from certain information, and of the logwood, would amount to forty *cuentos* (*i.e.* forty million maravedis). The number of slaves who were sent in these five ships was six hundred, of which two hundred were given to the masters of the vessels in payment of freight. In the course of these letters, throughout which Columbus speaks after the fashion of a practised slave-dealer, he alludes to the intended adoption, on behalf of private individuals, of a system of exchange of slaves for goods wanted from the mother country. The proposed arrangement was as follows:—The masters of vessels were to receive slaves from the colonists, were to carry them to Spain, and to pay for their maintenance during the voyage; they were then to allow the colonists so much money, payable at Seville, in proportion to the number of slaves brought over. This money they would expend according to the orders of the colonists, who would thus be able to obtain such goods as they might stand in need of. It was upon the same occasion of writing home to Spain that the admiral strongly urged upon the Catholic sovereigns that the Spanish colonists should be allowed to make use of the services of the Indians for a year or two until the colony should be in a settled state, a proposal which he did not wait for their highnesses' authority to carry out, and which led to a new form of the *repartimiento*. But this brings us back to Roldan's story, being closely connected with it.

After great trouble and many attempts at agreement, in which mention is more than once made of slaves, the dispute between Roldan's party, rebels

they might almost be called, and Columbus was at last, after two years' negotiation, brought to a close. Roldan kept his chief-justiceship and his friends received lands and slaves. It brings to mind the conclusion of many a long war in the old world, in which two great powers have been contending against each other, with several small powers on each side, the latter being either ruined in the course of the war or sacrificed at the end. The admiral gave *repartimientos* to those followers of Roldan who chose to stay in the island, which were constituted in the following manner. The admiral placed under such a cacique so many thousand *matas* (shoots of the cazabi), or, which came to the same thing, so many thousand *montones* (small mounds a foot and a half high, and ten or twelve feet round, on each of which a cazabi shoot was planted); and Columbus then ordered that the cacique or his people should till these lands for whomsoever they were assigned to. The *repartimiento* had now grown to its second state —not lands only, but lands and the tillage of them. We shall yet find that there is a further step in this matter, before the *repartimiento* assumes its utmost development. It seems, too, that, in addition to these *repartimientos*, Columbus gave slaves to those partisans of Roldan who stayed in the island. Others of Roldan's followers, fifteen in number, chose to return to Spain; they received a certain number of slaves, some one, some two, some three; and the admiral sent them home in two vessels which left the port of St. Domingo at the beginning of October, 1499.

On the arrival in Spain of these vessels, the queen was in the highest degree angered by the above proceedings, and said that the admiral had received no authority from her to give her vassals to any one.

She accordingly commanded proclamation to be made at Seville, Granada, and other places, that all persons who were in possession of Indians, given to them by the admiral, should, under pain of death, send those Indians back to Hispaniola, "and that particularly they should send back those Indians, and not the others who had been brought before, because she was informed that the others had been taken in just war." The former part of this proclamation has been frequently alluded to, and no doubt it deserves much praise; but from the latter part it is clear that there were some Indians who could justly, according to Queen Isabella, be made slaves. By this time, therefore, at any rate the question had been solved, whether by the learned in the law, theologians and canonists, I know not, but certainly in practice, that the Indians taken in war could be made slaves. The whole of this transaction is very remarkable, and, in some measure, inexplicable, on the facts before us. There is nothing to show that the slaves given to Roldan's followers were made slaves in a different way from those who had been sent over on former occasions, both by the admiral and his brother, for the benefit of the crown. And yet the queen, whom no one has ever accused of condescending to statecraft, seems to deal with this particular case as if it were something quite new. It cannot be said that the crown was favoured, for the question is put upon the legitimacy of the original capture; and to confirm this, there is a letter from the sovereigns to one of their household, from which it may be inferred, though the wording is rather obscure, that they, too, gave up the slaves which had come over for them on this occasion.

Everybody would be sorry to take away any

honour from Isabella; and all who are conversant with that period must wish that her proclamation could be proved to have gone to the root of the matter; and that it had forbidden the sending Indians to Spain as slaves on any pretext whatever.

To return to the affairs of Hispaniola. Columbus had now settled the Roldan revolt and other smaller ones; he had now, too, reduced the Indians into subjection; the mines were prospering; the Indians were to be brought together in populous villages, that so they might better be taught the Christian faith, and serve as vassals to the crown of Castile; the royal revenues (always a matter of much concern to Columbus) would, he thought, in three years amount to sixty millions of reals; and now there was time for him to sit down and meditate upon the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem, or the conversion of Cathay. If there had been any prolonged quiet for him, such great adventures would probably have begun to form the staple of his high thoughts. But he had hardly enjoyed more than a month of repose, when that evil came down upon him which "poured the juice of aloes into the remaining portion of his life."

The Catholic sovereigns had hitherto, upon the whole, behaved well to Columbus. He had bitter enemies at court. People were for ever suggesting to the monarchs that this foreigner was doing wrong. The admiral's son, Ferdinand, gives a vivid picture of some of the complaints preferred against his father. He says, "When I was at Granada, at the time the most serene Prince Don Miguel died, more than fifty of them (Spaniards who had returned from the Indies), as men without shame, bought a great quantity of grapes, and sat themselves down in the court of the

Alhambra, uttering loud cries, saying, that their Highnesses and the admiral made them live in this poor fashion on account of the bad pay they received, with many other dishonest and unseemly things, which they kept repeating. Such was their effrontery that when the Catholic king came forth they all surrounded him, and got him into the midst of them, saying, 'Pay! pay!' and if by chance I and my brother, who were pages to the most serene queen, happened to pass where they were, they shouted to the very heavens, saying, 'Look at the sons of the admiral of Mosquitoland, of that man who has discovered the lands of deceit and disappointment, a place of sepulchre and wretchedness to Spanish hidalgoes:' adding many other insulting expressions, on which account we excused ourselves from passing by them."

Unjust clamour, like the above, would not alone have turned the hearts of the Catholic sovereigns against Columbus; but this clamour was supported by serious grounds for dissatisfaction in the state and prospects of the colony: and when there is a constant stream of enmity and prejudice against a man, his conduct or his fortune will, some day or other, offer an opportunity for it to rush in upon him. However this may be, soon after the return of the five vessels from St. Domingo, mentioned above, which first told the news of the revolt of Roldan, Ferdinand and Isabella appear to have taken into serious consideration the question of suspending Columbus. He had, himself, in the letters transmitted by these ships, requested that some one might be sent to conduct the affairs of justice in the colony; but if Ferdinand and Isabella began by merely looking out for such an officer,

they ended in resolving to send one who should take the civil as well as judicial authority into his own hands. This determination was not, however, acted upon hastily. On the 21st of March, 1499, they authorised Francis de Bobadilla "to ascertain what persons have raised themselves against justice in the island of Hispaniola, and to proceed against them according to law." On the 21st of May, 1499, they conferred upon this officer the government, and signed an order that all arms and fortresses in the Indies should be given up to him. On the 26th of the same month, they gave him the following remarkable letter to Columbus—

"Don Christopher Columbus, our Admiral of the Ocean: We have commanded the Comendador Francis de Bobadilla, the bearer of this, that he speak to you on our part some things which he will tell you: we pray you give him faith and credence, and act accordingly.

"I the King, I the Queen.

"By their command,
"Miguel Perez de Almazan."

Bobadilla, however, was not sent from Spain until the beginning of July, 1500, and did not make his appearance in Hispaniola till the 23rd of August of the same year. Their Highnesses, therefore, must have taken time before carrying their resolve into execution; and what they meant by it is dubious. Certainly not that the matter should have been transacted in the coarse way which Bobadilla adopted. It is a great pity, and a sad instance of

mistaken judgment, that they fixed upon him for their agent. I imagine him to have been such a man as may often be met with, who, from his narrowness of mind and distinctness of prejudice, is supposed to be high-principled and direct in his dealings; and whose untried reputation has great favour with many people: until, placed in power some day, he shows that to rule well requires other things than one-sidedness in the ruling person; and is fortunate if he does not acquire that part of renown which consists in notoriety, by committing some colossal blunder, henceforth historical from its largeness.

The first thing that Bobadilla did on arriving at St. Domingo was to take possession of the admiral's house (he being at the fort La Concepcion), and then to summon the admiral before him, sending him the royal letter. Neither the admiral nor his brothers attempted to make any resistance; and Bobadilla, with a stupid brutality, which I suppose he took for vigour, put them in chains, and sent them to Spain. There is no doubt that the Castilian population of Hispaniola were rejoiced at Bobadilla's coming, and that they abetted him in his violence. Accusations came thickly against Columbus: "the stones rose up against him and his brothers," says the historian Herrera, emphatically. The people told how he had made them work, even sick men, at his fortresses, at his house, at the mills, and other buildings; how he had starved them; how he had condemned men to be whipped for the slightest causes, as, for instance, for stealing a peck of wheat when they were dying of hunger. Considering the difficulties he had to deal with, and the scarcity of provisions, many of these accusations, if rightly examined, would probably have not merely failed in producing anything

against Columbus, but would have developed some proofs of his firmness and sagacity as a governor. Then his accusers went on to other grounds, such as his not having baptised Indians "because he desired slaves rather than Christians;" moreover, that he had entered into war unjustly with the Indians, and that he had made many slaves, in order to send them to Castile. It is highly unlikely that these latter charges were preferred by a single colonist, unless, perhaps, by some man in religious orders. The probability is, that they came from the other side of the water; and this does give considerable strength to the report, that the displeasure of the court with respect to the admiral's proceedings against the Indians had to do with his removal from the government of the Indies. If so, it speaks largely for the continued admirable intentions of the Spanish court in this matter.

Poor Columbus! His chains lay very heavily upon him. He insisted, however, upon not having them taken off, unless by royal command, and would ever keep them by him ("I always saw them in his room," says his son Ferdinand), ordering that they should be buried with him. He did not know how many wretched beings would have to traverse those seas, in bonds much worse than his, with no room allowed them for writing, as was his case—not even for standing upright; nor did he foresee, I trust, that some of his doings would further all this coming misery. In these chains Columbus is of more interest to us than when in full power as governor of the Indies; for so it is, that the most infelicitous times of a man's life are those which posterity will look to most, and love him most for. This very thought may have comforted him; but

happily he had other sources of consolation in the pious aspirations which never deserted him.[1]

We have come now to the end of Columbus's administration of the Indies. Whatever we may think of his general policy, we cannot but regret his removal at the present time, when there appeared some chance of solidity in his government: though we must honestly admit that the Catholic sovereigns, with such evidence as they had before them, were far from wrong in recalling him, had it been done in a manner worthy of his and of their greatness.

[1] See Notes.

CHAPTER XII

COLUMBUS PLEADS HIS CAUSE AT COURT—NEW ENTERPRISE—OVANDO

THE career of Columbus had already been marked by strong contrasts. First, a "pauper pilot," then the viceroy of a new world; alternately hoping and fearing, despondent and triumphant, he had passed through strange vicissitudes of good and evil fortune. But no two events in his life stand out in stronger contrast to each other than his return to Spain after his first voyage, and his return now. He was then a conqueror; he was now a prisoner. He was then the idol of popular favour; he was now the unpopular victim of insidious maligners. In truth, the contrast was so startling as to strike home to the hearts of the common people, even of those—and there were many such—who had lost kinsmen or friends in that fatal quest for gold which the admiral had originated and stimulated. The broad fact was this: Columbus had given Spain a new world; Spain loaded him with fetters in return. There was a reaction. The current of public opinion began to turn in his favour. The nation became conscious of ingratitude to its benefactor. The nobility were shocked at the insult to one of their own order. And no sooner had the sovereigns learned from Columbus of his arrival, and of his disgrace, than they issued immediate orders for his liberation, and summoned him to their court at

Granada, forwarding money to enable him to proceed there in a style befitting his rank. They then received him with all possible signs of distinction; repudiated Bobadilla's arbitrary proceedings; and promised the admiral compensation and satisfaction. As a mark of their disapprobation of the way in which Bobadilla had acted under their commission, they pointedly refused to inquire into the charges against Columbus, and dismissed them as not worthy of investigation.

But though the sovereigns acted thus promptly on the admiral's behalf, there is no doubt that one of them, at least, was in no wise displeased at his being removed from his government. At each fresh discovery, Ferdinand had repented more and more of the concession by which Columbus was to receive an eighth part of the profits of the newly-found countries, and to be their governor-general. He probably apprehended that this viceroy, when once master of the boundless wealth which was supposed to be nearly within his grasp, would become more powerful than his master, and might finally throw off his allegiance altogether. But here was an opportunity, without any flagrant breach of faith, of eluding the bargain, by refusing, on very plausible grounds of policy, to reinstate Columbus immediately in his viceroyalty. Isabella, who had always been his firm friend, would probably have refused to acquiesce in any scheme for absolutely depriving him of his rights, but it was sufficiently obvious that just at present, while the colonists were excited against him, it would be prudent that some one else should take the reins of government.

The queen granted Columbus a private audience.

He told his story with much simple eloquence—so pathetically, indeed, that his warm-hearted mistress is said to have been moved to tears at the recital. He described the difficulties which he had encountered and the machinations of the enemies who had been constantly thwarting him. He pleaded that he had been obliged to create a line of conduct for himself, having to deal with an entirely new combination of circumstances without any precedent to guide him. And he implored the queen to believe that the accusations which had, of late, poured in against him, were prompted by the disappointed ambition and the jealousy of his enemies, and had not any solid foundation in fact.

Isabella replied in a very sensible speech, telling him that, while she fully appreciated his services, and knew the rancour of his enemies, she was afraid that he had given some cause for complaint. "Common report," she said,[1] "accuses you of acting with a degree of severity quite unsuitable for an infant colony, and likely to excite rebellion there. But the matter as to which I find it hardest to give you my pardon, is your conduct in reducing to slavery a number of Indians who had done nothing to deserve such a fate. This was contrary to my express orders. As your ill fortune willed it, just at the time when I heard of this breach of my instructions, everybody was complaining of you, and no one spoke a word in your favour. And I felt obliged to send to the Indies a commissioner to investigate matters, and give me a true report; and, if necessary, to put limits to the authority which you were accused of overstepping. If you were found guilty of the charges, he was to relieve you of the

[1] Charlevoix.

government and to send you to Spain to give an account of your stewardship. This was the extent of his commission. I find that I have made a bad choice in my agent; and I will take care to make an example of Bobadilla, which shall serve as a warning to others not to exceed their powers. I cannot, however, promise to reinstate you at once in your government. People are too much inflamed against you, and must have time to cool. As to your rank of admiral, I never intended to deprive you of it. But you must bide your time and trust in me."

It was arranged that the appointment of the new governor should be for two years only, at the expiration of which period, as Isabella thought, the administration of the colonies might be again entrusted to Columbus; while Ferdinand doubtless considered that some pretext might be found in the meantime for omitting to reappoint him at all. And though Columbus may have been told verbally that it was their Highnesses' intention to reinstate him after the lapse of two years, it is noteworthy that the document appointing Ovando makes no mention of any limitation of the term of his (Ovando's) government. The words are, "that he is to be governor as long as it is their highnesses' will and pleasure." Bobadilla, fortunately for the islanders, was forthwith to be superseded; for, if Columbus had chastised them with whips, Bobadilla was chastising them with scorpions. His first object was the discovery of gold; and to secure this he took a census of the natives, and assigned them all as slaves to the colonists. A large proportion of the latter, as we have seen, were simply the scourings of Spanish prisons; and

the brutality with which these men treated their wretched helots was very terrible. Some estimate of the amount of pressure employed may be formed from the fact that, although Bobadilla had reduced the royalty payable to the sovereigns from one-third to one-eleventh of the gold found, this smaller proportion produced a larger revenue. In other words, about four times as much gold was discovered under Bobadilla's system as under that of Columbus.

But when the sovereigns heard of the cruelties which that system involved, they urged forward the departure of Ovando, whom they had selected as governor, and who, to judge from his previous career, was a man eminently fitted to rule justly and mercifully. He was well known to Ferdinand and Isabella, having been chosen by the queen as one of the companions for her eldest son, Prince John. With regard to his personal appearance, we are told that he was of moderate stature, and had a "vermilion-coloured beard," which fact hardly conveys much to our minds; but it is added, in general terms, that his presence expressed authority. With respect to his mental qualifications, we learn that he was a friend to justice, an honourable person both in words and deeds, and that he held all avarice and covetousness in much aversion. He was humble, too, they say, and when he was appointed Commendador Mayor of the Order of Alcantara, he would never allow himself to be addressed by the title of "Lordship," which belonged to that office.

Previous to Ovando's departure from court, the monarchs were particular in giving him instructions both verbal and written. Among these instructions was one which Isabella especially insisted on, namely,

" that all the Indians in Hispaniola should be free from servitude and be unmolested by any one, and that they should live as free vassals, governed and protected by justice, as were the vassals of Castile." Like the vassals in Spain, the Indians were to pay tribute; they were also to assist in getting gold, but for this they were to be paid daily wages. Other commands were given at the same time for the conversion of the Indians, and to insure their being treated kindly.

Respecting the general government of the country, it was arranged that on Ovando's going out, all those who received pay from the government in the Indies, as well those who had accompanied Bobadilla as those who had come out originally with Columbus, should return to Spain, and that a new set to replace them should go out with Ovando. This was done because most of these soldiers and officials had necessarily been connected with the late troubles in the colony, and it would be a good plan to start afresh, as it were. At the same time it was provided that no Jews, Moors, or new converts were to go to the Indies, or be permitted to remain there; but negro slaves " born in the power of Christians were to be allowed to pass to the Indies, and the officers of the royal revenue were to receive the money to be paid for their permits." This is the first notice with respect to negroes going to the Indies. These instructions were given in the year 1501.

On Ovando's arrival in the colony, Bobadilla was to undergo the ordeal of a *residencia*, a kind of examination well known and constantly practised in Spain, to which authorities were subject on going out of office—being of the nature of

a general impeachment. It is satisfactory to find, that amongst the orders given to Ovando, there are some for the restitution of the admiral's property, and the maintenance of his mercantile rights.

Just before Ovando took leave of the king, he received a formal lecture upon the duties of a governor. The king, the queen, and a privy councillor, Antonio de Fonseca, were the persons present; and, as I imagine, the latter addressed Ovando on the part of their Highnesses. As it is not often that we have an opportunity of hearing a didactic lecture on the modes and duties of government given in the presence of a great master of that art, and probably looked over, if not prepared, by him, we must enter the royal cabinet, and hear some part of this discourse.

The first point which Fonseca impresses upon Ovando is, that before all things he is to look to what concerns the reverence of God and His worship. Then he is to examine into the life and capacity of the men about him, and to put good men into office; taking care, however, not to leave all the authority in the hands of subordinates (*here we may well imagine Ferdinand nodded approvingly*), to the diminution of his own power, "nor to make them so great that they shall have occasion to contrive novelties," in order to make themselves greater. Also, let there be change of authorities, so that many may have a share of profit and honour, and be made skilful in affairs.

That he should use moderation in making *repartimientos* and tributes, not overtaxing the people, which moderation would be furthered by his taking care that his personal and his household expenses were within due bounds. (*Here, I fancy, the*

monarchs looked at each other, thought of their own frugal way of living, and Isabella smiled.)

That he should not make himself judge in a cause, but let culprits be tried in the ordinary way. Thus he will avoid unpopularity, for "the remembrance of the crime perishes: not so that of the punishment." (*This aphorism must, I think, have been composed by Ferdinand himself. His writing is always exceedingly concise and to the purpose.*)

That he should not listen to tale-bearers (*parleros*), either of his own household or to those out of it; nor take vengeance upon anybody who had spoken ill of him, it being "an ugly thing to believe that anybody could speak ill of one who did ill to no one, but good to all." That it is one of the conditions of bad governors, "moved therein by their own consciences" to give heed to what they hear is said of them, and to take ill that, which if it had been said, they had better not have heard. Rather let injurious sayings be overcome by magnanimity.

That it would be good for him to give free audience to all, and to hear what they had to say; and if their counsel turned out ill, not to look coldly upon them for that. The same in war, or in any other undertaking: his agents must not have to fear punishment for failure, nor calumny for success: "for there were many persons who, to avoid the envy of their superiors, sought rather to lose a victory than to gain it." (*Here Ferdinand ought to have looked a little ashamed, being conscious that his own practice by no means came up to what he perceives to be noble and wise policy in the matter.*)

That he (Ovando) should look to what example he gives both in word and deed—governors living, as in a theatre, in the midst of the world. If he does

ill, even those who follow him in that will not the less disesteem him.

That although it is necessary for him to know the life of every one, yet he must not be over-inquisitive about it, nor rout up offences which are not brought before him officially. "Since if all offences were looked into, few men, or none, would be without punishment." Besides, for secret faults men may correct themselves: if those faults are made known, and especially if they are punished in excess, shame is lost, and men give way to their bad impulses.

That he is to encourage those who work, and to discourage the idle, as the universal Father does.

That, as regards liberality, he should so conduct himself, that men should not dare to ask him for things which they would know he must deny: this would be a great restraint upon them, and a great proof of good reputation in a governor.

That, in fine, all that had been said consisted in this, that he was to govern as he would be governed: and that "it behoved him to be intent in business, to show courage in difficulties, and management in all things, brevity in executing useful determinations, yet not as if carried away by passion, but always upon good counsel; considering much what a charge was upon him, for this thought would be useful to him at all times: and above all things he was to take heed (in order that the same thing might not happen to him which had happened to the admiral) that when any occasion for dealing briefly with an offence occurred, he should have swift recourse to punishment, for in such cases the remedy ought to be like a thunderbolt."

After reading the above, we cannot say that the

Catholic monarchs were inattentive to the government of their Indian possessions, nor can the sagacity which directed that attention be for a moment questioned. Indeed that sagacity is so remarkable that it may naturally occur to the learned reader to inquire whether Machiavelli's *Prince* had yet been published, and whether King Ferdinand could have read that much-abused manual of crafty statesmen. It was, however, about twelve years after this memorable audience granted by Ferdinand and Isabella to Ovando that *The Prince* is alluded to by Machiavelli, and described as a small unpublished work.

Charged with these instructions, then, Nicholas de Ovando left the port of San Lucas on the 13th of February, 1502, to take possession of his new government, having under him a gallant company of two thousand five hundred persons, a large proportion of them being hidalgoes. On his way he met with a terrible storm, in which one of his largest vessels foundered, and he had some difficulty in reaching St. Domingo at all. This, however, he succeeded in doing on the 15th of April, and entered at once upon the reforms which he was commissioned to institute.

He announced the *residencia* of Bobadilla, and placed Roldan under arrest. He exerted himself to found settlements along the coast, and at first, no doubt, he endeavoured to carry out the merciful directions which he had received with regard to the Indians. But, like Bobadilla, he was a knight of a religious order, with a certain narrow way of looking at things incident to his profession, with no especial culture that we know of, and with little originality of character. In these respects he pre-

sented a remarkable contrast to Columbus, who was a man of various accomplishments, large minded, enthusiastic, fluent, affectionate, inventive. And so, whereas Columbus had always treated the natives with consideration and humanity, Ovando soon began to rule them with a rod of iron. We must not linger too long over his administration of what we may call Columbus's kingdom, but there is one sad episode which it is worth while to recount, if only to make the policy of Columbus stand out in brighter relief.

When Anacaona, the Queen of Xaragua, had received the admiral's brother, Don Bartolomé, on a former occasion, the Spaniards affirmed her to be a wise woman, of good manners, and pleasant address; and she is said to have earnestly entreated her brother to take warning by the fate of her husband, Caonabó, and to love and obey the Christians. As she was now to play the hostess again, this time to Ovando, we may refer to the account of her former reception of a Spanish governor, the Adelantado, of which there are some details furnished by Peter Martyr.

After mentioning that the queen and her brother received the lieutenant with all courtesy and honour, he says: "They brought our men to their common hall, into which they come together as often as they make any notable games or triumphs, as we have said before. Here, after many dancings, singings, maskings, runnings, wrestlings, and other trying of masteries, suddenly there appeared in a large plain near unto the hall, two great armies of men of war, which the king for his pastime had caused to be prepared, as the Spaniards use the play with reeds, which they call *Juga de Canias*. As the armies drew

near together, they assailed the one the other as fiercely as if mortal enemies with their banners spread should fight for their goods, their lands, their lives, their liberty, their country, their wives and their children, so that within the moment of an hour, four men were slain, and many wounded. The battle also would have continued longer, if the king had not, at the request of our men, caused them to cease."

At this time, in the year 1503, some of Roldan's former partisans were settled in the province of Xaragua, and were a great trouble to the colony. Herrera says, in a quiet sarcastic way, "they lived in the discipline they had learnt from Roldan;" and the governing powers of Xaragua found them "intolerable." He also adds that Anacaona's people were in policy, in language, and in other things superior to all the other inhabitants of the island. As might be expected, there were constant disturbances between these Spaniards and the adjacent Indians; and the Spaniards took care to inform the governor that their adversaries, the Indians of Xaragua, intended to rebel. Perhaps they did so intend. Ovando resolved, after much consultation, to take a journey to Xaragua. It must be said, in justice to Ovando, that this does not look as if he thought the matter were a light one. Xaragua was seventy leagues from St. Domingo. The governor set out well accompanied, with seventy horsemen and three hundred foot-soldiers. Anacaona, who had some suspicion of his intentions, summoned all her feudatories around her "to do honour" to him, when she heard of his coming. She went out to meet Ovando with a concourse of her subjects, and with the same festivities of singing and dancing as

in former days she had adopted when she went to receive the Adelantado. Various pleasures and amusements were provided for the strangers, and probably Anacaona thought that she had succeeded in soothing and pleasing this severe-looking governor, as she had done the last. But the former followers of Roldan were about the governor, telling him that there certainly was an insurrection at hand, that if he did not look to it now, and suppress it at once, the revolt would be far more difficult to quell when it did break out. Thus they argued, using all those seemingly wise arguments of wickedness which from time immemorial have originated and perpetuated treachery. Ovando listened to these men; indeed he must have been much inclined to believe them, or he would hardly have come all this way. He was now convinced that an insurrection was intended.

With these thoughts in his mind, he ordered that, on a certain Sunday, after dinner, all the cavalry should get to horse, on the pretext of a tournament. The infantry, too, he caused to be ready for action. He himself, a Tiberius in dissembling, went to play at quoits, and was disturbed by his men coming to him and begging him to look on at their sports. The poor Indian queen hurried with the utmost simplicity into the snare prepared for her. She told the governor that her caciques, too, would like to see this tournament, upon which, with demonstrations of pleasure, he bade her come with all her caciques to his quarters, for he wanted to talk to them, intimating, as I conjecture, that he would explain the festivity to them. Meanwhile, he gave his cavalry orders to surround the building; he placed the infantry at certain commanding positions; and

told his men, that when, in talking with the caciques, he should place his hand upon the badge of knighthood which hung upon his breast, they should rush in and bind the caciques and Anacaona. It fell out as he had planned. All these deluded Indian chiefs and their queen were secured. She alone was led out of Ovando's quarters, which were then set fire to, and all the chiefs burnt alive. Anacaona was afterwards hanged and the province was desolated.

Humanity does not gain much, after all, by this man's not taking the title of "Lordship" which he had a right to.

Finally, the governor collected the former followers of Roldan in Xaragua, and formed a town of their settlement, which he named "the city of the true peace" (*La villa de la vera Paz*), but which a modern chronicler well says might more properly have been named "Aceldama, the field of blood." I observe that the arms assigned to this new settlement were a dove with the olive-branch, a rainbow, and a cross.

But it is time to return to Columbus, who in the meantime was chafing at the inactivity which had been forced upon him. His was a restless spirit, perhaps too restless for an organiser, who ought to possess an inexhaustible amount of patience, and to be able to wait as well as to labour. He had formed a theory that some strait existed through which a passage might be made from the neighbourhood of St. Domingo to those regions in Asia from which the Portuguese were just beginning to reap a large profit, and which must be very near that home of the gold which had always occupied his thoughts. He pressed the sovereigns to provide him with ships for an expedition having for its special object the discovery

of this strait; and on the occurrence of some delay as to the equipment of vessels for the purpose, he seems to have written to Ferdinand, reproaching him with the treatment which he had received, and with the want of confidence manifested towards him now. To this Ferdinand answered in a letter which was certainly well calculated to soothe the admiral's indignation. It was to the following effect: "You ought to be convinced of our displeasure at your captivity, for we lost not a moment in setting you free. Your innocence is well known; you are aware of the consideration and friendship with which we have treated you; the favours which you have received from us shall not be the last that you will receive; we assure to you your privileges, and are desirous that you and your children may enjoy them. We offer to confirm them to you again, and to put your eldest son in possession of all your offices, whenever you wish. . . . We beg you to set out as soon as possible."

On the 9th of May the preparations were complete, and Columbus set sail from Cadiz with his brother, Don Bartholomew, and his second son, Fernando. As an instance of the admiral's chivalrous love of adventure, it may be mentioned that upon hearing that the Portuguese fortress of Arzilla, on the African coast, was besieged by the Moors, he first proceeded thither, quite voluntarily, to its relief. When he reached it, however, he found that the siege had been raised; and his services were not, therefore, called into requisition.

After a singularly prosperous voyage, he reached Martinique on the 13th of June. His instructions from the sovereigns expressly interdicted him from visiting St. Domingo; but, on finding that his largest

ship required some repairs to make her seaworthy, he boldly disregarded the prohibition, and sent a boat to ask Ovando to furnish him with another vessel in place of the damaged one, and to allow his squadron to take refuge in the harbour during a hurricane which he foresaw to be imminent. Ovando refused both requests. His commission set forth that Columbus was not to visit the island; and the contingency of hurricanes was not provided for. Besides, the governor believed that this prediction of a hurricane was a mere pretext of the admiral's for obtaining admission to the harbour. To an eye unaccustomed to tropical changes, the weather appeared to be "set fair." Scarcely a ripple passed over the sea; scarcely a breath stirred the luxuriant foliage on shore. Ovando repulsed with scorn the admiral's suggestion that, at any rate, the departure of the fleet for Spain should be delayed. This fleet was the richest in cargo that had ever left the islands. It contained all the gold which had been wrung out of the natives by Bobadilla's harsh measures. Of one nugget, especially, the old chroniclers speak in the most glowing terms. According to them, it was the largest piece of virgin gold ever discovered. It had been found accidentally by an Indian woman at the mines, while listlessly moving her rake to and fro in the water one day during dinner time. Its value was estimated at 1,350,000 maravedis;[1] and in the festivities which took place on the occasion, it was used as a dish for a roast pig, the miners saying that no king of Castile had ever feasted from a dish of such value. We do not find that the poor Indian woman had any part in the good fortune. Indeed, as Las Casas observes, she was fortunate if she had

[1] Equivalent to about £416.

any portion of the meat, not to speak of the dish. Bobadilla had purchased the nugget for Ferdinand and Isabella, and had shipped it with other treasure valuable enough to go a long way towards compensating the sovereigns for all their expenditure on the new colony—if the fleet could only reach Spain in safety.

But on the second day after its departure the admiral's prediction became terribly verified. A tornado of unexampled fury swept over the seas; and those on shore could judge of the fate that was likely to befall the unfortunate squadron, as many of the buildings and trees on the island were levelled with the ground by the force of the tempest. Of all the ships, only one—and that the frailest of the fleet—was able to accomplish the voyage to Spain. A few vessels managed to return, in dire distress, to the island; but by far the greater number foundered at sea. The historians of the period do not fail to remark that, while the ship which reached Spain safely was the one carrying the admiral's property, a special providence decreed that his enemies—Bobadilla, Roldan, and their associates in cruelty and plunder—should perish with their ill-gotten gains.

Like Cassandra, Columbus witnessed the discomfiture of the disbelievers in his prophecy: like her he was denied the right of sanctuary upon the occurrence of the disaster which he had foretold. Repulsed from port by Ovando, however, the admiral sailed along the coast, and succeeded in bringing his own ship under the lee of the land when the storm came on. But the three other caravels were in no little danger (particularly the disabled one, which was commanded by the Adelantado),

and some days elapsed before the little squadron was reunited in the port of Azua, to the west of San Domingo. Thence he proceeded to Jaquimo, on the extremity of the same coast, and after refitting his ships, set sail for Jamaica on the 14th of July, 1502. Passing that island, he met with light and varying winds, and contrary currents, in the archipelago of reefs and keys which he had previously named the Queen's Garden.

For about nine weeks he made so little progress that his crews began to clamour for the abandonment of the expedition. The ships were worm-eaten and leaky. Provisions were running short. The seamen had seen their commander thrust away from what might be called his own door; and the sight of his powerlessness had strengthened their independence until it amounted to insubordination. Fortunately, however, before the discontent broke out into open mutiny, a breeze sprang up from the east, and the admiral easily persuaded his unruly crews that it was better to prosecute their voyage than to remain beating about the islets waiting to return home.

They were soon gladdened by the sight of the pine-clad slopes of the little island of Guanaja, lying about forty miles from Truxillo, on the coast of Honduras. Here there appeared a canoe, much more like the ships of the Old World than any they had seen before, manned by twenty-five Indians who had come from the continent on a trading voyage among the islands. Their cargo consisted of cotton fabrics, iron-wood swords, flint knives, copper axe-heads, and a fruit called by the natives cacao, to which the Spaniards were now introduced for the first time, but the merits of which, as a beverage,

they were not slow to appreciate. The admiral treated these people with much kindness, and won their confidence at once by presenting them with some of the glittering toys which never failed to dazzle a barbarian eye.

One old Indian, whom Columbus selected as apparently the most intelligent of the band, consented to accompany him as pilot, and indicated, by signs, his knowledge of a land, not far distant, where there were ships, and arms, and merchandise, and, in fact, all the marks of civilisation which were displayed to him by the Spaniards themselves, and with which he professed to be perfectly familiar. Whether he intended to mislead Columbus, or whether, like most of his race, he was merely proud of being impassive, and of being able to repress all indication of astonishment at startling novelties, it is certain that his demeanour and his signs were interpreted by the admiral to indicate an acquaintance with a country, rich and civilised, lying towards the east; which country could, of course, be no other than the long-sought-for kingdom of the Grand Khan. Had Columbus, in pursuance of his first intention, steered to the west, a few hours would have brought him to the coast of Yucatan; and the riches of Mexico would have rewarded his discovery. But this savage, like his evil destiny, crossed his path at the critical moment, and turned him from the road to fortune.

Steering along the coast of Honduras, on the 12th of September, he reached Cape Gracias a Dios, to which he gave this name in pious thankfulness for the southerly turn taken by the land at that point, so that the east winds, which had hitherto obstructed him, were now favourable to his course along the

coast. A month later he entered several bays on the Isthmus of Panama, where he was able to procure provisions and to refit his vessels, but failed to obtain any intelligence either of the kingdom of the Khan, or of the strait which he fancied would lead him there. The natives whom he encountered were generally disposed to be friendly; but, in one instance, when the depth of water in a creek obliged him to moor his vessels close to the shore, an attack of the Indians was only repulsed by the use of artillery, the thunder and lightning of which seemed always to possess, in the eyes of the savages, a supernatural and therefore awful character. On another occasion, when a conference was held with one of the tribes, great alarm was caused by a notary, who attended to take notes of the conversation. The savages had never before seen the operation of writing; and they regarded it as a spell which was to have some magic effect upon them, and which they must neutralise by various mystic fumigations which they believed to act as counter-charms. "They were themselves skilled sorcerers," says Columbus—whose credulity in such matters was only that of his age.

It was not until the 5th of December that the admiral could resolve to abandon his easterly course, although the conviction had been gradually forcing itself upon him that the condition of his ships was such as to render a prosecution of his voyage almost impossible. He had scarcely turned back, intending to found a settlement on the river Veragua, before he encountered a storm which tried his worm-eaten caravels very severely. The thunder and lightning were incessant; the waterspouts (the first they had seen) threatened to engulf them; huge crests of

waves burst in phosphorescent floods over them; and their escape, if we consider the smallness of the caravels, and the force of a tropical cyclone, was little less than miraculous. At last, after eight days' tossing to and fro, the admiral gained the mouth of a river, which he named the Bethlehem, because he entered it on the day of the Epiphany.

In this neighbourhood there was a powerful cacique, named Quibia, whose territory contained much gold, and with whom, therefore, the Spaniards were anxious to treat. But he outwitted them. Offering to supply them with guides to conduct them to his gold mines, he really sent them, not to his own mines, but to those of a rival cacique, of Urira. Here, however, they succeeded in acquiring, by barter and by actual discovery, large quantities of the precious metal, which seemed to be so abundant that the admiral made sure that he had come to the very Aurea Chersonesus from which Solomon had obtained the gold for the temple at Jerusalem. He had seen more signs of gold here in two days, he said, than he had seen in St. Domingo in four years. His first step was to form a settlement to provide a depot for the gold which might be collected. A convenient site was found near the mouth of the river Bethlehem, and by the end of March the Adelantado had built a village of huts, in which it was proposed that he should remain, with about eighty followers, while Columbus returned to Spain for supplies.

But rumours soon reached the Adelantado of a projected attack on the settlement by the natives, and he took measures to seize Quibia in his own palace. The Indians, dismayed at the capture of their cacique, offered large quantities of gold for his ransom, but the Adelantado preferred to keep

him as a hostage for peace. However, as he was being conveyed down the river, on board one of the boats, he managed, although bound hand and foot, and in the custody of one of the most powerful of the Spaniards, to spring overboard and to make his escape, swimming under water to the shore. Henceforward, as might have been expected, there was war to the knife between the natives and the settlers. An attempt was made to burn down the village by means of blazing arrows. A boat's crew of eleven Spaniards, who had proceeded some distance up the river, were attacked by savages in canoes, and only one man escaped to carry to the settlement the news of the massacre of his companions.

The admiral, with three of the caravels, was in the offing, awaiting a wind favourable for his departure, but the dry weather had made the river so shallow that it was impossible for the caravel left with the settlers to cross the bar, and as they had no boat strong enough to weather the surf, it seemed impossible for them to carry to him tidings of their condition. They were in despair; for if they were left, they knew that they were left to perish. The admiral, on his part, had become uneasy, not knowing that their failure to communicate with him was owing to the fact that their only seaworthy boat had been destroyed by the Indians. His own boats were small and scarcely weathertight. But some of Quibia's family, who had been taken on board the squadron as prisoners, had made their escape by swimming to the shore, three miles off; and this feat encouraged a bold pilot of Seville, named Ledesma, who was on board the admiral's caravel, to attempt a similar exploit. Never was bearer of reprieve for

the condemned more welcome. Ledesma communicated with the Adelantado, and conveyed to the admiral intelligence of the desperate state of affairs. The result was that, when in a few days the wind moderated, all the settlers were taken on board the squadron, which now only consisted of three ships, as it was found necessary to abandon the caravel which had been left inside the harbour bar.

And there was no time to spare. The rough weather had severely tried the crazy and worm-eaten vessels; and anxiety and want of rest were having their effect on Columbus. Making his way first to Porto Bello, where he was obliged to leave another caravel as no longer seaworthy, on the 31st of May he quitted the coast at a point on the west of the Gulf of Darien, and steered northward towards Cuba. A collision between his two remaining ships rendered them still more unfit to cope with the squalls and breakers of the archipelago; but at last, in the middle of June, with his crews in despair, nearly all his anchors lost, and his vessels worm-eaten so as to be "as full of holes as a honeycomb," he arrived off the southern coast of Cuba, where he obtained supplies of cassava bread from friendly natives.

CHAPTER XIII

REMARKABLE DESPATCH—MUTINY—ECLIPSE PREDICTED

FAILING to make head against the wind so as to reach Hispaniola, Columbus shaped his course for Jamaica, and there, in the harbour which he had named Santa Gloria on his former visit, his voyage was perforce brought to a conclusion. As his ships could not float any longer, he ran them on shore, side by side, and built huts upon the decks for housing the crews. Such a habitation, like the Swiss lake dwellings, afforded remarkable advantages of position in case of attack by a hostile tribe.

The admiral's first care was to prevent any offence being given to the aborigines which might give cause for such an attack. Knowing, by sad experience, the results of permitting free intercourse between the Spaniards and the natives, he enforced strictly a rule forbidding any Spaniard to go ashore without leave; and took measures for regulating the traffic for food so as to prevent the occurrence of any quarrel. Diego Mendez, who had been his lieutenant, and had shown himself the boldest of his officers throughout this voyage, volunteered to proceed into the interior of the island to make arrangements for the periodical supply of provisions from some of the more remote tribes, as it was certain that the sudden addition to the population would soon exhaust the resources of the immediate neighbourhood. This service Mendez performed with great adroitness, and a regular market was established to which the natives

brought fish, game, and cassava bread, in exchange for Spanish toys and ornaments.

Although the Spaniards were thus secure from starvation for the present, their position was most critical. The journey to the easternmost extremity of Jamaica would probably not be unattended with difficulty and danger, for it must be effected through the midst of Indian tribes, hostile to each other, and therefore probably not unanimous in being friendly towards strangers. But the most formidable obstacle to communication with the government of Hispaniola was the strait of forty leagues' breadth, full of tumbling breakers and rushing currents, which separated the two islands. However, it was necessary that the attempt should be made; and Diego Mendez, though he considered it to be "not merely difficult, but impossible, to cross in so small a vessel as a canoe," volunteered for the service, after all the other Spaniards had declined to undertake it. He was to be the bearer of a letter from the admiral to Ovando, asking him to send a vessel to release the castaways from their imprisonment, and of a despatch to the sovereigns, giving a detailed account of the admiral's voyage and a glowing description of the riches of Veragua. This despatch is very characteristic of the writer, bearing, as it does, the marks of strong enthusiasm, of almost fanatical superstition, of confidence in the midst of despair, and of exultation in the face of ruin. Describing his reflections during the storm at the mouth of the river Bethlehem, he breaks into the following rhapsody, which, probably in perfect good faith, dwells on the contrast between the goodness of God and the bad faith of man, in a way which ought to have touched Ferdinand nearly. It is worth quot-

ing at full length, as an example of the wild fervour of a rapt enthusiast.

"Wearied and sighing," writes Columbus, "I fell into a slumber, when I heard a piteous voice saying to me, 'O fool, and slow to believe and serve thy God, who is the God of all! What did He more for Moses, or for His servant David, than He has done for thee? From the time of thy birth He has ever had thee under His peculiar care. When He saw thee of a fitting age, He made thy name to resound marvellously throughout the earth, and thou wert obeyed in many lands, and didst acquire honourable fame among Christians. Of the gates of the ocean sea, shut up with such mighty chains, He delivered to thee the keys; the Indies, those wealthy regions of the world, He gave thee for thine own, and empowered thee to dispose of them to others, according to thy pleasure. What did He more for the great people of Israel, when He led them forth from Egypt? Or for David, whom, from being a shepherd, He made a king in Judæa? Turn to Him, then, and acknowledge thine error: His mercy is infinite. He has many and vast inheritances yet in reserve. Fear not to seek them. Thine age shall be no impediment to any great undertaking. Abraham was above a hundred years when he begat Isaac; and was Sarah youthful? Thou urgest despondingly for succour. Answer! Who hath afflicted thee so much, and so many times, God, or the world? The privileges and promises which God hath made to thee He hath never broken,[1] neither hath He said, after having received thy services, that His meaning was different, and to be understood in a different sense. He fulfils all that He promises,

[1] A sarcasm to "catch the conscience of the king."

and with increase. Such is His custom. I have shown thee what thy Creator hath done for thee, and what He doeth for all. The present is the reward of the toils and perils thou hast endured in serving others.' I heard this," adds Columbus, "as one almost dead, and had no power to reply to words so true, excepting to weep for my errors. Whoever it was that spoke to me finished by saying, 'Fear not! All these tribulations are written in marble, and not without cause.'"

"Though this be madness, there is method in it;" but still, the whole character of Columbus forbids us to assume that this alleged vision was merely an ingenious device for remonstrating with the sovereigns. It must not be forgotten that in those times the popular belief as to such matters was very different from that which obtains now; and that Columbus was as credulous as his contemporaries on the subject of the supernatural. It was easy for an imagination like his to be wrought upon so as to give to "airy nothings," to the "thousand phantasies that crowd into the memory," the character of special revelations from heaven. In this very despatch his religious fervour is displayed again and again. Jerusalem, according to the prophecy, was to be rebuilt by the hand of a Christian. He would be that Christian. Prester John, so said tradition, had asked for missionaries to instruct him in the true faith. He would conduct them to the kingdom of this unknown potentate. Then he goes on to deplore his own hard case; "surrounded by cruel and hostile savages; isolated, infirm, expecting each day will be my last; severed from the holy sacraments of the Church, so that my soul, if parted here from my body, must be for ever forgotten. . . . If

it should please God to deliver me hence, I humbly supplicate your majesties to permit me to repair to Rome, and perform other pilgrimages." Columbus, then, being really convinced of the fatal consequences of not being within reach of formal communion with the Church, must have felt that he was risking more than his mere bodily life when he wandered into those unknown countries; that he staked both body and soul on his success.

Laden with these despatches, Mendez and a Spanish comrade set out along the coast in a canoe manned by six Indians. The party arrived safely at the easternmost cape of Jamaica (now called Point Morant); but while awaiting calm weather for crossing the strait to Hispaniola, they were attacked by a tribe of savages, who overpowered them by sheer force of numbers, and carried them off as captives. The beads and toys, however, which Mendez had taken with him to barter with the natives, were too attractive not to claim the chief share of the attention of his conquerors; and while they were settling the division of the spoil he managed to effect his escape to his canoe, and to return in it in safety to Santa Gloria. As soon as a second canoe could be procured, Mendez was ready to make a second attempt, but on this occasion he stipulated that he should be accompanied to the easternmost point of Jamaica by a force sufficient to protect him from the hostile tribes. Accordingly, on the 7th July, 1503, the Adelantado, with an armed escort, proceeded along the shore; while Mendez, with six Spaniards and ten Indians, in one canoe, and Fieschi (a Genoese, who had commanded one of the caravels), with a like number in the other, made their way by sea to Point Morant.

After waiting a short time for fine weather, the two canoes started for Hispaniola, and reached a little island called Navazza on the third day, both Spaniards and Indians having suffered terribly from the want of water, with which they were insufficiently supplied. Another day's labour at the oar brought them to Cape Tiburon, where Mendez left his companions and proceeded alone to St. Domingo. Here he was informed that the governor had left for Xaragua; and thither he made his way alone, through fifty leagues of wild forest country, to represent to Ovando the necessity of sending relief to the admiral, and that speedily. Ovando seems to have temporised. He dreaded the return of Columbus, as likely to excite the seditious to a revolt against his own government. And so far from taking active steps in the matter himself, it was only with reluctance that he authorised Mendez to proceed to St. Domingo to purchase a caravel on behalf of Columbus, in which Fieschi might return to Santa Gloria, and bring him off.

Meanwhile, month after month passed by, and the unfortunate castaways at Santa Gloria had no tidings from Hispaniola, and were even ignorant whether their messengers had succeeded in reaching that island. At last, in January, 1504, the murmurs against the inaction of Columbus broke out into open mutiny. Francesco Porras, the captain of one of the caravels, headed the mutineers, and going to the admiral, who was confined to his bed by the gout, told him that he (the admiral) evidently was afraid to return to Spain; but that the people had determined to remain no longer to perish, and intended to depart at once. On this there arose shouts from the followers of Porras, "To Castile!

We follow!" The admiral made a temperate speech, pointing out the danger of attempting to leave the island in mere canoes, and the absurdity of supposing that he had not a common interest with them in all respects. But Porras was as persistent in his desire to go, as Columbus in his determination to stay; and, taking possession of the canoes which had been purchased from the natives, the mutineers set out on their journey towards Hispaniola, leaving the admiral and his brother with scarcely any adherents except those whom sickness incapacitated for undertaking the journey.

The progress of Porras and his followers through the island was marked by a series of outrages on the natives which completely neutralised the effect of the admiral's conciliatory policy. They seized forcibly on whatever provisions could be found, and mockingly referred the owners to Columbus for payment. Three attempts to cross over to Hispaniola failed in consequence of rough weather. On one occasion the canoes were in so much danger of being swamped that the Spaniards cast everything on board into the sea; and, as this did not lighten the canoes sufficiently, they then proceeded to force overboard their unfortunate companions, the Indians, who swam after them for a long time, but sank one by one, being prevented by the swords of the Spaniards from approaching. Abandoning, as hopeless, their design of reaching Hispaniola, the mutineers then proceeded to roam over the island, quartering themselves on the Indians, and committing every possible excess.

Of course the influence of this conduct on the relations between Columbus and the natives was soon apparent. The trinkets and beads, which had

once been so precious in their eyes, had first lost the charm of novelty, then the value of rarity. The circulating medium became so depreciated that provisions were scarcely procurable. And, similarly, the personal veneration which the natives had first evinced for the white men had given way to contempt and to hatred when familiarity had shown how worthless were these "superior beings." The Indians refused to minister to their wants any longer; and famine was imminent.

But just at this last extremity, the admiral, ever fertile in devices, bethought him of an expedient for re-establishing his influence over the Indians. His astronomical knowledge told him that on a certain night an eclipse of the moon would take place. One would think that people living in the open air must be accustomed to see such eclipses sufficiently often, not to be particularly astonished at them. But Columbus judged—and as the event proved, judged rightly—that by predicting the eclipse he would gain a reputation as a prophet, and command the respect and the obedience due to a person invested with supernatural powers. He assembled the caciques of the neighbouring tribes. Then, by means of an interpreter, he reproached them with refusing to continue to supply provisions to the Spaniards. "The God who protects me," he said, "will punish you. You know what has happened to those of my followers who have rebelled against me; and the dangers which they encountered in their attempt to cross to Haiti; while those who went at my command[1] made the passage without difficulty. Soon, too, shall the divine vengeance

[1] This was a gratuitous assumption: as the admiral had as yet no tidings of the success of Mendez.

fall on you; this very night shall the moon change her colour and lose her light, in testimony of the evils which shall be sent upon you from the skies."

The night was fine: the moon shone down in full brilliancy. But, at the appointed time, the predicted phenomenon took place, and the wild howls of the savages proclaimed their abject terror. They came in a body to Columbus, and implored his intercession. They promised to let him want for nothing if only he would avert this judgment: as an earnest of their sincerity they collected hastily a quantity of food, and offered it at his feet. At first diplomatically hesitating, Columbus presently affected to be softened by their entreaties. He consented to intercede for them; and, retiring to his cabin, performed, as they supposed, some mystic rite which should deliver them from the threatened punishment. Soon the terrible shadow passed away from the face of the moon; and the gratitude of the savages was as deep as their previous terror. But, being blended with much awe, it was not so evanescent as gratitude often is; and henceforward there was no failure in the regular supply of provisions to the castaways.

Eight months had passed away without any tidings of Mendez, when one evening there hove in sight a small caravel which stood in towards the harbour of Santa Gloria, and anchored just outside. A boat which put off from the caravel brought on shore her commander, a certain Diego de Escobar, whom Columbus recognised as a person whom he had sentenced to be hanged as a ringleader in Roldan's mutiny, and who had been pardoned by Bobadilla. The proceedings of this person — whose reprieve must have now seemed to the admiral particularly injudicious—were singular enough. Standing at a

distance from Columbus, as if the admiral had been in quarantine, he shouted, at the top of his voice, a message from Ovando, to the effect that he (the governor) regretted the admiral's misfortunes very keenly, that he hoped before long to send a ship of sufficient size to take him off. He added that, in the meantime, Ovando begged him to accept a slight mark of his friendship. The "slight mark of his friendship" was—a side of bacon, which, with a small cask of wine and a letter from Ovando, he delivered to the admiral, and rowed off as fast as possible. The whole scheme of this visit, which was probably planned by Ovando with the object of ascertaining the real condition and designs of Columbus, was in the last degree insulting to him and tantalising to his companions, with whom D'Escobar would not permit any communication to be held. However, the admiral wrote a civil reply to Ovando, describing piteously the hardships of his condition, and disclaiming any ulterior design with regard to the government of Hispaniola. Carrying this missive, D'Escobar set sail at once, and was out of sight, on his return voyage, before the morning of the day after his arrival.

This mysterious visit was by no means satisfactory to the admiral's companions. As he alone had held communication with D'Escobar, he was free to give them whatever account he chose of his interview; and this liberty, it may be parenthetically observed, he did not scruple to exercise somewhat at the expense of strict truth. He represented himself as having refused to depart with D'Escobar, because the caravel was too small to carry them all away, and he was determined to share their lot, confident in Ovando's assurance of speedy succour. He made

overtures for a reconciliation to Porras, and endeavoured to persuade the mutineers to return on board the ships. But these overtures were scornfully repulsed and the admiral's messengers were sent back with threats of force. As for the caravel, Porras had little difficulty in persuading his credulous followers that it was merely an apparition which Columbus had conjured up by magic arts; and such was the reputation for sorcery which the admiral had acquired by his astronomical observations that even the sight and taste of some tangible bacon (half of that present from Ovando of which we have heard), which he sent as a peace-offering to the mutineers, failed to convince them of the material character of the supposed phantom ship.

Soon, however, the differences between the rival parties were brought to an issue. The Adelantado received information that Porras was planning a descent on the ships, with the object of seizing the stores and capturing the admiral. Resolving to anticipate this attack, he placed himself at the head of fifty [1] devoted partisans of Columbus, and sallied out to engage the mutineers. A furious struggle ensued; but the Adelantado performed prodigies of valour, and his followers were better supplied with firearms than the rebels; so that the latter sustained a complete defeat, and their leader Porras was carried off as a prisoner to the ships.

The natives, who had been spectators of the affray, were much perplexed. Wiser people than these poor savages have looked with sorrowful wonder on the appeal to brute force to decide the

[1] It would appear from this number that either there had been some defection from the ranks of the mutineers, or that more than half the Spaniards had remained faithful to the admiral.

quarrels of nations; and the Indians, when they saw strife and death among the beings whom they had formerly considered as heaven-descended and immortal, felt that their estimate of these attributes ought to be lowered. But when curiosity impelled them to examine the corpses of the Spaniards who had been killed in the encounter, after minutely inspecting several bodies, they came to that of Ledesma—whose name may be remembered as that of the gigantic pilot of Seville who swam through the surf at Bethlehem to the Adelantado's relief—who had now fallen, covered with wounds, fighting on behalf of the mutineers. As the savages proceeded to thrust their fingers into his wounds, Ledesma, who had fainted from pain, recovered consciousness, and uttered a stentorian yell which put the Indians to flight, says an ancient chronicler, "as if all the dead men were at their heels." And as Ledesma eventually recovered, notwithstanding his having received wounds sufficient to kill three ordinary persons, the natives must have been inspired by a proper respect for the almost miraculous vitality of the white men.

The victory gained by the Adelantado was conclusive. The rebels at once submitted to the admiral, who consented to pardon them; reserving only their ringleader, Porras, for future punishment. It was arranged that they should not again take up their habitation on board the ships, but Columbus sent ashore a trusty lieutenant as their commander, and supplied them at the same time with European articles to barter for food with the natives. And so the two bands of castaways—one on ship and one on shore—awaited the promised succour, with the weariness of hope deferred.

CHAPTER XIV

FALLING FORTUNES—CONCLUSION

It was not till the 28th of June, 1504, when just a year had elapsed since their arrival at Santa Gloria, that the Spaniards were gladdened by the sight of the two caravels which had been sent — one by Mendez, the other by Ovando—to their relief. Their embarkation, as may be supposed, was quickly effected; but adverse winds made the voyage to Hispaniola a long one, and the two vessels did not reach St. Domingo before the 13th of August.

Much to the surprise of the admiral, he found himself treated with the most punctilious courtesy by Ovando, who even proceeded to the harbour, with a numerous suite, to receive him in state upon his arrival. However, differences soon arose as to the conflicting jurisdictions of the viceroy and the governor, especially with regard to the case of Porras, whom Ovando, in opposition to the admiral's wish, insisted upon releasing from custody. Moreover, he even announced his intention of instituting a general inquiry as to the events which had taken place in Jamaica, in order to decide whether Porras and his associates had been justified in their rebellion. Columbus disputed the right of Ovando to take upon himself the office of judge in such a matter; and remarked that his own authority as viceroy must have sunk very low indeed, if it did not empower him to punish his officers for mutinying against himself.

This dispute was unfortunate as regards the private interests of the admiral, for the revenues arising from his property in the island had been collected under the authority of the governor, who, upon the occurrence of this quarrel, was easily able to raise difficulties in the way of his obtaining a fair account of the proceeds. But he was all the more anxious to return to Spain; and, within a month from his arrival at St. Domingo, he started homeward in the caravel which had brought him from Jamaica.

But even in this last voyage he was forced to "make head against a sea of troubles." His evil star was in the ascendant. Twice his vessel nearly foundered. Twice her masts were sprung in successive tempests. His own health was succumbing to the acute attacks of gout which had become more and more frequent for the last few years. And so, prostrated by sickness, nearly ruined in means, and now hopeless of encouragement from the sovereigns, the discoverer of the New World arrived at Seville, on the 7th of November, 1504, in as miserable a plight as his worst enemy could have wished.

He could scarcely expect to be received with much favour at court. He had failed in the search for that strait leading to the kingdom of the Grand Khan, the discovery of which had been the special object of his expedition; he had lost his ships; he had brought home wonderful stories of golden lands, but no gold. Porras [1] was at large, and had influence at court, which enabled him to stimulate the existing prejudice against Columbus.

Poor, old, infirm, he had now to receive intelligence

[1] It seems just possible that, as the original narrative of the mutiny of Porras was written by Fernando Columbus, who would naturally take his father's side, something is to be said for Porras which has not been said for him by historians.

which was to deepen all his evils. He remained at Seville, too unwell to make a journey himself, but sent his son Diego to court, to manage his affairs for him. The complaints of the admiral, that he had no news from court, are quite touching. He says, he desires to hear news each hour. Couriers are arriving every day, but none for him: his very hair stands on end to hear things so contrary to what his soul desires. He alludes, I imagine, to the state of the queen's health; for, in a memorandum of instructions to his son, written at this period, the first thing, he says, to be done is, "to commend affectionately, with much devotion," the soul of the queen to God. Could the poor Indians but have known what a friend to them was dying, one continued wail would have gone up to heaven from Hispaniola and all the Western islands. The dread decree, however, had gone forth, and on the 26th of November, 1504, it was only a prayer for the departed that could have been addressed; for the great queen was no more. If it be permitted to departing spirits to see those places on earth they yearn much after, we might imagine that the soul of Isabella would give "one longing, lingering look" to the far West.

And if so, what did she see there? How different was the aspect of things from what governors and officers of all kinds had told her: how different from aught that she had thought of, or commanded! She had insisted that the Indians were to be free: she would have seen their condition to be that of slaves. She had declared that they were to have spiritual instruction: she would have seen them less instructed than the dogs. She had ordered that they should receive payment for their labour: she would have found that all they received was a

mockery of wages, just enough to purchase once, perhaps, in the course of the year, some childish trifles from Castile. She had always directed that they should have kind treatment and proper maintenance: she would have seen them literally watching under the tables of their masters, to catch the crumbs which fell there. She would have beheld the Indian labouring at the mine under cruel buffetings, his family neglected, perishing, or enslaved. She would have marked him on his return, after eight months of dire toil, enter a place which knew him not, or a household that could only sorrow over the gaunt creature who had returned to them, and mingle their sorrows with his; or, still more sad, she would have seen Indians who had been brought from far distant homes, linger at the mines, too hopeless, or too careless, to return.

Turning from what might have been seen by Queen Isabella, had her departing gaze pierced to the outskirts of her dominions, we have to record the closing scene of the strange eventful history of Columbus, who did not long survive his benefactress. Ever since his return from his fourth voyage to the Indies, he had done little else than memorialise, and petition, and negotiate about his rights. But Ferdinand, who had always looked coldly on his projects, was disposed to regard his claims with still less favour. Columbus professed himself willing to sacrifice the arrears of revenue due to him, but urged strenuously his demand that his son Diego should be made viceroy of the Indies, in accordance with the terms of the grant making that dignity hereditary in his family. Ferdinand did not refuse absolutely: the breach of faith would have been too flagrant. But he procrastinated, and ended by referring the

matter to the significantly named Board of Discharges of the Royal Conscience, which board regulated its proceedings by the known wishes of the king, and procrastinated too.

The proverb, "Fear old age, for it does not come alone," was especially applicable to Columbus, while suffering sickness without the elasticity to bear it, poverty with high station and debt, and all the delay of suitorship, not at the beginning, but at the close, of a career. A similar decline of fortune is to be seen in the lives of many men; of those, too, who have been most adventurous and successful in their prime. Their fortunes grow old and feeble with themselves; and those clouds which were but white and scattered during the vigour of the day, sink down together, stormful and massive, in huge black lines, across the setting sun.

Shortly after the arrival of Philip and his queen in Spain, Columbus had written to their Highnesses, deploring his inability to come to them, through illness, and saying that, notwithstanding his pitiless disease (the gout), he could yet do them service the like of which had not been seen. Perhaps he meant service in the way of good advice touching the administration of the Indies; perhaps, for he was of an indomitable spirit, that he could yet make more voyages of discovery. But there was then only left for him that voyage in which the peasant who has seen but the little district round his home, and the great travellers in thought and deed, are alike to find themselves upon the unknown waters of further life. Looked at in this way, what a great discoverer each of us is to be! But we must not linger too long, even at the deathbed of a hero. Having received all the sacraments of the Church,

and uttering as his last words, "*In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum,*" Columbus died, at Valladolid, on Ascension Day, the 20th of May, 1506. His remains were carried to Seville and buried in the monastery of Las Cuevas; afterwards they were removed to the cathedral at St. Domingo; and, in modern times, were taken to the cathedral at Havana, where they now rest.

APPENDIX[1]

I. CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF AFRICA BY THE ANCIENTS

The knowledge of the ancients with respect to the Atlantic coast of Africa is considered by modern investigators much less extensive than had been imagined, and it is doubted whether they had any practical authority for the belief that Africa was circumnavigable. The alleged voyage of Eudoxus of Cyzicus, from the Red Sea to Gibraltar, though recorded by Pliny, Pomponius Mela, and others, is given entirely on the assertion of Cornelius Nepos, who does not tell from whence he derived his information. Posidonius (cited by Strabo) gives an entirely different account of this voyage, and rejects it with contempt.[2]

The famous voyage of Hanno, the Carthaginian, is supposed to have taken place about a thousand years before the Christian era. The *Periplus Hannonis* remains, a brief and obscure record of this expedition, and a subject of great comment and controversy. By some it has been pronounced a fictitious work, fabricated among the Greeks, but its authenticity has been ably vindicated. It appears to be satisfactorily proved, however, that the voyage of this navigator has been greatly exaggerated, and that he never circumnavigated the extreme end of Africa. Mons. de Bougainville[3] traces his route to a promontory which he named the West Horn, supposed to be Cape Palmas, about five or six degrees north of the equinoctial line, whence he proceeded to another pro-

[1] From Washington Irving's *Life of Columbus*.

[2] Gosselin, *Recherches sur la Géographie des Anciens*, tom. i. p. 162, etc.

[3] *Mémoirs de l'Acad. des Inscript.*, tom. xxvi.

montory, under the same parallel, which he called the South Horn, supposed to be Cape de Tres Puntas. Mons. Gosselin, however, in his *Researches into the Geography of the Ancients* (tome i. p. 162, etc.), after a rigid examination of the *Periplus* of Hanno, determines that he had not sailed further south than Cape Nam. Pliny, who makes Hanno range the whole coast of Africa, from the straits to the confines of Arabia, had never seen his *Periplus*, but took his idea from the works of Xenophon of Lampsaco. The Greeks surcharged the narration of the voyager with all kinds of fables, and on their unfaithful copies Strabo founded many of his assertions. According to M. Gosselin, the itineraries of Hanno, of Scylax, Polybius, Statius, Sebosus, and Juba; the recitals of Plato, of Aristotle, of Pliny, of Plutarch, and the tables of Ptolemy, all bring us to the same results, and, notwithstanding their apparent contradictions, fix the limit of southern navigation about the neighbourhood of Cape Nam, or Cape Bojador.

The opinion that Africa was a peninsula, which existed among the Persians, the Egyptians, and perhaps the Greeks, several centuries prior to the Christian era, was not, in his opinion, founded upon any known facts; but merely on conjecture, from considering the immensity and unity of the ocean; or perhaps on more ancient traditions; or on ideas produced by the Carthaginian discoveries beyond the Straits of Gibraltar, and those of the Egyptians beyond the Gulf of Arabia. He thinks that there was a very remote period when geography was much more perfect than in the time of the Phœnicians and the Greeks, whose knowledge was but confused traces of what had previously been better known.

The opinion that the Indian Sea joined the ocean was admitted among the Greeks, and in the school of Alexandria, until the time of Hipparchus. It seemed authorised by the direction which the coast of Africa took after Cape Aromata, always tending westward, as far as it had been explored by navigators.

It was supposed that the western coast of Africa rounded off to meet the eastern, and that the whole was bounded by the ocean, much to the northward of the equator.

Such was the opinion of Crates, who lived in the time of Alexander; of Aratus, of Cleanthes, of Cleomedes, of Strabo, of Pomponius Mela, of Macrobius, and many others.

Hipparchus proposed a different system, and led the world into an error which for a long time retarded the maritime communication of Europe and India. He supposed that the seas were separated into distinct basins, and that the eastern shores of Africa made a circuit round the Indian Sea, so as to join those of Asia beyond the mouth of the Ganges. Subsequent discoveries, instead of refuting this error, only placed the junction of the continents at a greater distance. Marinus of Tyre, and Ptolemy, adopted this opinion in their works, and illustrated it in their maps, which for centuries controlled the general belief of mankind, and perpetuated the idea that Africa extended onward to the south pole, and that it was impossible to arrive by sea at the coasts of India. Still there were geographers who leaned to the more ancient idea of a communication between the Indian Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. It had its advocates in Spain, and was maintained by Pomponius Mela, and by Isidore of Seville. It was believed also by some of the learned in Italy, in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries; and thus was kept alive until it was acted upon so vigorously by Prince Henry of Portugal, and at length triumphantly demonstrated by Vasco da Gama, in his circumnavigation of the Cape of Good Hope.

II. PRESTER JOHN

Said to be derived from the Persian *Prestegani* or *Perestigani*, which signifies apostolique; or *Preschtak Geham*, angel of the world. It is the name of a potent Christian monarch of shadowy renown, whose dominions were placed by writers of the Middle Ages sometimes in the remote parts of Asia and sometimes in Africa, and of whom such contradictory accounts were given by the travellers of those days that the very existence either of him or his kingdom came to be considered doubtful. It now appears to be admitted that there really was such a potentate in a remote part of Asia. He was of the Nestorian Christians, a sect spread throughout Asia, and taking its name and origin from Nestorius, a Christian patriarch of Constantinople.

The first vague reports of a Christian potentate in the interior of Asia, or as it was then called, India, were brought to Europe by the Crusaders, who it is supposed gathered them from the Syrian merchants who traded to the very confines of China.

In subsequent ages, when the Portuguese in their travels and voyages discovered a Christian king among the Abyssinians, called Baleel-Gian, they confounded him with the potentate already spoken of. Nor was the blunder extraordinary, since the original Prester John was said to reign over a remote part of India; and the ancients included in that name Ethiopia and all the regions of Africa and Asia bordering on the Red Sea and on the commercial route from Egypt to India.

Of the Prester John of India we have reports furnished by William Ruysbrook, commonly called Rubruquis, a Franciscan friar sent by Louis IX., about the middle of the thirteenth century, to convert the Grand Khan. According to him, Prester John was originally a Nestorian priest, who on the death of the sovereign made himself

king of the Naymans, all Nestorian Christians. Carpini, a Franciscan friar, sent by Pope Innocent in 1245 to convert the Mongols of Persia, says that Ocoday, one of the sons of Ghengis Khan of Tartary, marched with an army against the Christians of Grand India. The king of that country, who was called Prester John, came to their succour. Having had figures of men made of bronze, he had them fastened on the saddles of horses, and put fire within, with a man behind with a bellows. When they came to battle these horses were put in the advance, and the men who were seated behind the figures threw something into the fire, and blowing with their bellows, made such a smoke that the Tartars were quite covered with it.

They then fell on them, despatched many with their arrows, and put the rest to flight.

Marco Polo (1271) places Prester John near the great wall of China, to the north of Chan-si, in Tenduch, a populous region full of cities and castles.

Mandeville (1332) makes Prester sovereign of Upper India (Asia), with four thousand islands tributary to him.

When John II. of Portugal was pushing his discoveries along the African coast, he was informed that 350 leagues to the east of the kingdom of Benin, in the profound depths of Africa, there was a puissant monarch, called Ogave, who had spiritual and temporal jurisdiction over all the surrounding kings.

An African prince assured him, also, that to the east of Timbuctoo there was a sovereign who professed a religion similar to that of the Christians and was king of a Mosaic people.

King John now supposed he had found traces of the real Prester John, with whom he was eager to form an alliance religious as well as commercial. In 1487 he sent envoys by land in quest of him. One was a gentleman of his household, Pedro de Covilham; the other, Alphonso de Paiva. They went by Naples to Rhodes, thence to Cairo, thence to Aden on the Arabian Gulf above the mouth of the Red Sea.

Here they separated with an agreement to rendezvous

at Cairo. Alphonso de Paiva sailed direct for Ethiopia; Pedro de Covilham for the Indies. The latter passed to Calicut and Goa, where he embarked for Sofala on the eastern coast of Africa, thence returned to Aden, and made his way back to Cairo. Here he learned that his coadjutor, Alphonso de Paiva, had died in that city. He found two Portuguese Jews waiting for him with fresh orders from King John not to give up his researches after Prester John until he found him. One of the Jews he sent back with a journal and verbal accounts of his travels. With the other he set off again for Aden; thence to Ormuz, at the entrance of the Gulf of Persia, where all the rich merchandise of the East was brought, to be transported thence by Syria and Egypt into Europe.

Having taken note of everything here, he embarked on the Red Sea, and arrived at the court of an Abyssinian prince named Escander (the Arabic version of Alexander), whom he considered the real Prester John. The prince received him graciously, and manifested a disposition to favour the object of his embassy, but died suddenly, and his successor Naut refused to let Covilham depart, but kept him for many years about his person as his prime councillor, lavishing on him wealth and honours. After all, this was not the real Prester John, who, as has been observed, was an Asiatic potentate.

III. VOYAGES OF THE SCANDINAVIANS

Many elaborate dissertations have been written to prove that discoveries were made by the Scandinavians on the northern coast of America long before the era of Columbus, but the subject appears still to be wrapped in much doubt and obscurity.

It has been asserted that the Norwegians, as early as the ninth century, discovered a great tract of land to the west of Iceland, which they called Grand Iceland; but this has been pronounced a fabulous tradition. The most plausible account is one given by Snorro Sturleson in his Saga or Chronicle of King Olaus. According to this writer, one Biorn of Iceland, sailing to Greenland in search of his father, from whom he had been separated by a storm, was driven by tempestuous weather far to the south-west, until he came in sight of a low country, covered with wood, with an island in its vicinity. The weather becoming favourable, he turned to the north-east without landing, and arrived safe at Greenland. His account of the country he had beheld, it is said, excited the enterprise of Leif, son of Eric Rauda (or Redhead), the first settler of Greenland. A vessel was fitted out, and Leif and Biorn departed alone in quest of this unknown land. They found a rocky and sterile island, to which they gave the name of Helleland; also a low sandy country covered with wood, to which they gave the name of Markland; and, two days afterward, they observed a continuance of the coast, with an island to the north of it. This last they described as fertile, well wooded, producing agreeable fruits, and particularly grapes, a fruit with which they were unacquainted. On being informed by one of their companions, a German, of its qualities and name, they called the country, from it, Vinland. They ascended a river, well stored with fish, particularly salmon, and came to a lake from which the river took its origin, where they passed the winter. The

climate appeared to them mild and pleasant, being accustomed to the rigorous climates of the north. On the shortest day the sun was eight hours above the horizon. Hence it has been concluded that the country was about the 49th degree of north latitude, and was either Newfoundland, or some part of the coast of North America about the Gulf of St. Lawrence.[1] It is added that the relatives of Leif made several voyages to Vinland; that they traded with the natives for furs; and that, in 1121, a bishop named Eric went from Greenland to Vinland to convert the inhabitants to Christianity. From this time says Forster, we know nothing of Vinland, and there is every appearance that the tribe which still exists in the interior of Newfoundland, and which is so different from the other savages of North America, both in their appearance and mode of living, and always in a state of warfare with the Esquimaux of the northern coast, are descendants of the ancient Normans.

The author of the present work has not had the means of tracing this story to its original sources. He gives it on the authority of M. Malte-Brun and Mr. Forster. The latter extracts it from the Saga or Chronicle of Snorro, who was born in 1179, and wrote in 1215; so that his account was formed long after the event is said to have taken place. Forster says: "The facts which we report have been collected from a great number of Icelandic manuscripts, and transmitted to us by Torfæus in his two works entitled *Veteris Grœnlandiæ Descriptio*, Hafnia, 1706, and *Historia Winlandiæ Antiquæ*, Hafnia, 1705." Forster appears to have no doubt of the authenticity of the facts. As far as the author of the present work has had experience in tracing these stories of early discoveries of portions of the New World, he has generally found them very confident deductions drawn from very vague and questionable facts. Learned men are too prone to give substance to mere shadows, when they assist some preconceived theory. Most of these accounts, when divested of the erudite comments of their editors, have proved little better than the traditionary fables

[1] Forster's *Northern Voyages*, book ii. chap. ii.

respecting the imaginary islands of St. Borondon, and of the Seven Cities.

There is no great improbability, however, that such enterprising and roving voyagers as the Scandinavians may have wandered to the northern shores of America, about the coast of Labrador, or the shores of Newfoundland; and if the Icelandic manuscripts said to be of the thirteenth century can be relied upon as genuine, free from modern interpolation, and correctly quoted, they would appear to prove the fact. But granting the truth of the alleged discoveries, they led to no more result than would the interchange of communication between the natives of Greenland and the Esquimaux. The knowledge of them appears not to have extended beyond their own nation, and to have been soon neglected and forgotten by themselves.

Another pretension to an early discovery of the American continent has been set up, founded on an alleged map and narrative of two brothers of the name of Zeno, of Venice; but it seems more invalid than those just mentioned. The following is the substance of this claim.

Nicolo Zeno, a noble Venetian, is said to have made a voyage to the north in 1380, in a vessel fitted out at his own cost, intending to visit England and Flanders; but meeting with a terrible tempest, was driven for many days he knew not whither, until he was cast away upon Friseland, an island much in dispute among geographers, but supposed to be the archipelago of the Ferroe Islands. The shipwrecked voyagers were assailed by the natives, but rescued by Zichmni, a prince of the islands, lying on the south side of Friseland, and duke of another district lying over against Scotland. Zeno entered into the service of this prince, and aided him in conquering Friseland, and other northern islands. He was soon joined by his brother Antonio Zeno, who remained fourteen years in those countries.

During his residence in Friseland, Antonio Zeno wrote to his brother Carlo, in Venice, giving an account of a report brought by a certain fisherman, about a land to

the westward. According to the tale of this mariner, he had been one of a party who sailed from Friseland about twenty-six years before, in four fishing-boats. Being overtaken by a mighty tempest, they were driven about the sea for many days, until the boat containing himself and six companions was cast upon an island called Estotiland, about one thousand miles from Friseland. They were taken by the inhabitants and carried to a fair and populous city, where the king sent for many interpreters to converse with them, but none that they could understand, until a man was found who had likewise been cast away upon the coast, and who spoke Latin. They remained several days upon the island, which was rich and fruitful, abounding with all kinds of metals, and especially gold.[1] There was a high mountain in the centre, from which flowed four rivers which watered the whole country. The inhabitants were intelligent and acquainted with the mechanical arts of Europe. They cultivated grain, made beer, and lived in houses built of stone. There were Latin books in the king's library, though the inhabitants had no knowledge of that language. They had many cities and castles, and carried on a trade with Greenland for pitch, sulphur, and peltry. Though much given to navigation, they were ignorant of the use of the compass, and finding the Friselanders acquainted with it, held them in great esteem; and the king sent them with twelve barks to visit a country to the south, called Drogeo. They had nearly perished in a storm, but were cast away upon the coast of Drogeo. They found the people to be cannibals, and were on the point of being killed and devoured, but were spared on account of their great skill in fishing.

The fisherman described this Drogeo as being a country of vast extent, or rather a new world; that the inhabitants were naked and barbarous; but that far to the southwest there was a more civilised region, and temperate

[1] This account is taken from Hackluyt, vol. iii. p. 123. The passage about gold and other metals is not to be found in the original Italian of Ramusio (tom. ii. p. 23), and is probably an interpolation.

climate, where the inhabitants had a knowledge of gold and silver, lived in cities, erected splendid temples to idols, and sacrificed human victims to them, which they afterward devoured.

After the fisherman had resided many years on this continent, during which time he had passed from the service of one chieftain to another and traversed various parts of it, certain boats of Estotiland arrived on the coast of Drogeo. The fisherman went on board of them, acted as interpreter, and followed the trade between the mainland and Estotiland for some time, until he became very rich: then he fitted out a bark of his own, and with the assistance of some of the people of the island, made his way back, across the thousand intervening miles of ocean, and arrived safe at Friseland. The account he gave of these countries determined Zichmni, the Prince of Friseland, to send an expedition thither, and Antonio Zeno was to command it. Just before sailing, the fisherman, who was to have acted as guide, died; but certain mariners, who had accompanied him from Estotiland, were taken in his place. The expedition sailed under command of Zichmni; the Venetian, Zeno, merely accompanied it. It was unsuccessful. After having discovered an island called Icaria, where they met with a rough reception from the inhabitants, and were obliged to withdraw, the ships were driven by a storm to Greenland. No record remains of any further prosecution of the enterprise.

The countries mentioned in the account of Zeno were laid down on a map originally engraved on wood. The island of Estotiland has been supposed by Malte-Brun to be Newfoundland; its partially civilised inhabitants the descendants of the Scandinavian colonists of Vinland; and the Latin books in the king's library to be the remains of the library of the Greenland bishop who emigrated thither in 1121. Drogeo, according to the same conjecture, was Nova Scotia and New England. The civilised people to the south-west, who sacrificed human victims in rich temples, he surmises to have been the Mexicans, or some ancient nation of Florida or Louisiana.

The premises do not appear to warrant this deduction. The whole story abounds with improbabilities; not the least of which is the civilisation prevalent among the inhabitants: their houses of stone, their European arts, the library of their king, no traces of which were to be found on their subsequent discovery. Not to mention the information about Mexico penetrating through the numerous savage tribes of a vast continent. It is proper to observe that this account was not published until 1558, long after the discovery of Mexico. It was given to the world by Francisco Marcolini, a descendant of the Zeni, from the fragments of letters said to have been written by Antonio Zeno to Carlo his brother. "It grieves me," says the editor, "that the book, and divers other writings concerning these matters, are miserably lost; for being but a child when they came to my hands, and not knowing what they were, I tore them and rent them in pieces, which now I cannot call to remembrance but to my exceeding great grief." [1]

This garbled statement by Marcolini derived considerable authority by being introduced by Abraham Ortelius, an able geographer, in his *Theatrum Orbis;* but the whole story has been condemned by able commentators as a gross fabrication. Mr. Forster resents this as an instance of obstinate incredulity, saying that it is impossible to doubt the existence of the country of which Carlo, Nicolo, and Antonio Zeno talk; as original acts in the archives of Venice prove that the chevalier undertook a voyage to the north; that his brother Antonio followed him; that Antonio traced a map, which he brought back and hung up in his house, where it remained subject to public examination, until the time of Marcolini, as an incontestable proof of the truth of what he advanced. Granting all this, it merely proves that Antonio and his brother were at Friseland and Greenland. Their letters never assert that Zeno made the voyage to Estotiland. The fleet was carried by a tempest to Greenland, after which we hear no more of him; and his account of Estotiland and Drogeo rests simply on the tale of the fisherman, after

[1] Hackluyt, *Collect.*, vol. iii. p. 127.

whose descriptions his map must have been conjecturally projected. The whole story resembles much the fables circulated shortly after the discovery of Columbus, to arrogate to other nations and individuals the credit of the achievement.

M. Malte-Brun intimates that the alleged discovery of Vinland may have been known to Columbus when he made a voyage in the North Sea in 1477,[1] and that the map of Zeno, being in the national library at London, in a Danish work, at the time when Bartholomew Columbus was in that city, employed in making maps, he may have known something of it, and have communicated it to his brother.[2] Had M. Malte-Brun examined the history of Columbus with his usual accuracy, he would have perceived that, in his correspondence with Paulo Toscanelli in 1474, he had expressed his intention of seeking India by a route directly to the west. His voyage to the north did not take place until three years afterward. As to the residence of Bartholomew in London, it was not until after Columbus had made his propositions of discovery to Portugal, if not to the courts of other powers. Granting, therefore, that he had subsequently heard the dubious stories of Vinland, and of the fisherman's adventures, as related by Zeno, or at least by Marcolini, they evidently could not have influenced him in his great enterprise. His route had no reference to them, but was a direct western course, not toward Vinland, and Estotiland, and Drogeo, but in search of Cipango, and Cathay, and the other countries described by Marco Polo as lying at the extremity of India.

[1] Malte-Brun, *Hist. de Geog.*, tom. i. lib. xvii.
[2] Idem, *Geog. Universelle*, tom. xiv. Note sur la découverte de l'Amérique.

IV. THE COLOMBOS

During the early part of the life of Columbus there were two other navigators, bearing the same name, of some rank and celebrity, with whom he occasionally sailed; their names occurring vaguely from time to time, during the obscure part of his career, have caused much perplexity to some of his biographers, who have supposed that they designated the discoverer. Fernando Columbus affirms them to have been family connections,[1] and his father says, in one of his letters, "I am not the first admiral of our family."

These two were uncle and nephew, the latter being termed by historians Colombo the younger (by the Spanish historians Colombo el Mozo). They were in the Genoese service, but are mentioned, occasionally, in old chronicles as French commanders, because Genoa, during a great part of their time, was under the protection, or rather the sovereignty of France, and her ships and captains, being engaged in the expeditions of that power, were identified with the French marine.

Mention is made of the elder Colombo in Zurita's *Annals of Aragon* (L. xix. p. 261), in the war between Spain and Portugal, on the subject of the claim of the Princess Juana to the crown of Castile. In 1476, the King of Portugal determined to go to the Mediterranean coast of France, to incite his ally, Louis XI., to prosecute the war in the province of Guipuzcoa.

The king left Toro, says Zurita, on the 13th of June, and went by the river to the city of Porto, in order to await the armada of the King of France, the captain of which was Colon (Colombo), who was to navigate by the Straits of Gibraltar to pass to Marseilles.

After some delays Colombo arrived in the latter part of July with the French armada at Bermeo, on the coast of

[1] *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 1.

Biscay, where he encountered a violent storm, lost his principal ship, and ran to the coast of Galicia, with an intention of attacking Ribaldo, and lost a great many of his men. Thence he went to Lisbon to receive the King of Portugal, who embarked in the fleet in August, with a number of his noblemen, and took two thousand two hundred foot soldiers, and four hundred and seventy horse, to strengthen the Portuguese garrisons along the Barbary coast. There were in the squadron twelve ships and five caravels. After touching at Ceuta the fleet proceeded to Colibre, where the king disembarked in the middle of September, the weather not permitting them to proceed to Marseilles. (Zurita, L. xix. ch. li.)

This Colombo is evidently the naval commander of whom the following mention is made by Jacques George de Chaufepie, in his supplement to Bayle (vol. ii. p. 126 of letter C).

"I do not know what dependence," says Chaufepie, "is to be placed on a fact reported in the *Ducatiana* (part i. p. 143), that Columbus was in 1474 captain of several ships for Louis XI., and that, as the Spaniards had made at that time an irruption into Roussillon, he thought that, for reprisal, and without contravening the peace between the two crowns, he could run down Spanish vessels. He attacked, therefore, and took two galleys of that nation, freighted on the account of various individuals. On complaints of this action being made to King Ferdinand, he wrote on the subject to Louis XI.; his letter is dated the 9th of December, 1474. Ferdinand terms Christopher Columbus a subject of Louis; it was because, as is known, Columbus was a Genoese, and Louis was sovereign of Genoa; although that city and Savona were held of him in fief by the Duke of Milan."

It is highly probable that it was the squadron of this same Colombo of whom the circumstance is related by Bossi, and after him by Spotorno on the authority of a letter found in the archives of Milan, and written in 1476 by two illustrious Milanese gentlemen, on their return from Jerusalem. The letter states that in the previous year, 1475, as the Venetian fleet was stationed off Cyprus

to guard the island, a Genoese squadron, commanded by one Colombo, sailed by them with an air of defiance, shouting "Viva San Giorgia!" As the republics were then at peace they were permitted to pass unmolested.

Bossi supposes that the Colombo here mentioned was Christopher Columbus the discoverer; but it appears rather to have been the old Genoese admiral of that name, who according to Zurita was about that time cruising in the Mediterranean, and who, in all probability, was the hero of both the preceding occurrences.

The nephew of this Colombo, called by the Spanish Colombo el Mozo, commanded a few years afterwards a squadron in the French service, and Columbus may at various times have held an inferior command under both uncle and nephew, and been present on the above-cited occasions.

V. FERNANDO COLUMBUS

Fernando Columbus (or Colon, as he is called in Spain), the natural son and historian of the admiral, was born in Cordova. There is an uncertainty about the exact time of his birth. According to his epitaph, it must have been on the 28th of September, 1488; but according to his original papers preserved in the library of the cathedral of Seville, and which were examined by Don Diego Ortiz de Zuñiga, historian of that city, it would appear to have been on the 29th of August, 1487. His mother, Doña Beatrix Enriquex, was of a respectable family, but was never married to the admiral, as has been stated by some of his biographers.

Early in 1494 Fernando was carried to court, together with his elder brother Diego, by his uncle Don Bartholomew, to enter the royal household in quality of page to the Prince Don Juan, son and heir to Ferdinand and Isabella. He and his brother remained in this situation until the death of the prince, when they were taken by Queen Isabella as pages into her own service. Their education, of course, was well attended to, and Fernando in after life gave proofs of being a learned man.

In the year 1502, at the tender age of thirteen or fourteen years, Fernando accompanied his father in his fourth voyage of discovery, and encountered all its singular and varied hardships with a fortitude that is mentioned with praise and admiration by the admiral.

After the death of his father it would appear that Fernando made two voyages to the New World. He accompanied the Emperor Charles V. also to Italy, Flanders, and Germany; and according to Zuñiga (*Anales de Seville de* 1539, No. 3) travelled over all Europe and a part of Africa and Asia. Possessing talents, judgment, and industry, these opportunities were not lost upon him,

and he acquired much information in geography, navigation, and natural history. Being of a studious habit, and fond of books, he formed a select, yet copious library, of more than twenty thousand volumes, in print and in manuscript. With the sanction of the Emperor Charles V. he undertook to establish an academy and college of mathematics at Seville; and for this purpose commenced the construction of a sumptuous edifice, without the walls of the city, facing the Guadalquiver, in the place where the monastery of San Laureano is now situated. His constitution, however, had been broken by the sufferings he had experienced in his travels and voyages, and a premature death prevented the completion of his plan of the academy, and broke off other useful labours. He died in Seville on the 12th of July, 1539, at the age, according to his epitaph, of fifty years, nine months and fourteen days. He left no issue, and was never married. His body was interred, according to his request, in the cathedral of Seville. He bequeathed his valuable library to the same establishment.

Don Fernando devoted himself much to letters. According to the inscription on his tomb, he composed a work in four books, or volumes, the title of which is defaced on the monument, and the work itself is lost. This is much to be regretted, as, according to Zuñiga, the fragments of the inscription specify it to have contained among a variety of matter, historical, moral, and geographical notices of the countries he had visited, but especially of the New World, and of the voyages and discoveries of his father.

His most important and permanent work, however, was a history of the admiral, composed in Spanish. It was translated into Italian by Alonzo de Ulloa, and from this Italian translation have proceeded the editions which have since appeared in various languages. It is singular that the work only exists in Spanish, in the form of a retranslation from that of Ulloa, and full of errors in the orthography of proper names, and in dates and distances.

Don Fernando was an eye-witness of some of the facts which he relates, particularly of the fourth voyage wherein

he accompanied his father. He had also the papers and charts of his father, and recent documents of all kinds to extract from, as well as familiar acquaintance with the principal personages who were concerned in the events which he records. He was a man of probity and discernment, and writes more dispassionately than could be expected when treating of matters which affected the honour, the interests, and happiness of his father. It is to be regretted, however, that he should have suffered the whole of his father's life, previous to his discoveries (a period of about fifty-six years), to remain in obscurity. He appears to have wished to cast a cloud over it, and only to have presented his father to the reader after he had rendered himself illustrious by his actions, and his history had become in a manner identified with the history of the world. His work, however, is an invaluable document, entitled to great faith, and is the corner-stone of the history of the American Continent.

VI. THE SHIPS OF COLUMBUS

In remarking on the smallness of the vessels with which Columbus made his first voyage, Dr. Robertson observes that, "in the fifteenth century, the bulk and construction of vessels were accommodated to the short and easy voyages along the coast, which they were accustomed to perform." We have many proofs, however, that even anterior to the fifteenth century there were large ships employed by the Spaniards, as well as by other nations. In an edict published in Barcelona, in 1354, by Pedro IV., enforcing various regulations for the security of commerce, mention is made of Catalonian merchant ships of two and three decks and from 8000 to 12,000 quintals burden.

In 1419, Alonzo of Aragon hired several merchant ships to transport artillery, horses, etc., from Barcelona to Italy, among which were two, each carrying one hundred and twenty horses, which it is computed would require a vessel of at least 600 tons.

In 1463, mention is made of a Venetian ship of 700 tons which arrived at Barcelona from England, laden with wheat.

In 1497, a Castilian vessel arrived there being of 12,000 quintals burden. These arrivals incidentally mentioned among others of similar size, as happening at one port, show that large ships were in use in those days.[1] Indeed, at the time of fitting out the second expedition of Columbus, there were prepared in the port of Bermeo, a carraca of 1250 tons, and four ships of from 150 to 450 tons burden. Their destination, however, was altered, and they were sent to convoy Muley Boabdil, the last Moorish king of Granada, from the coast of his conquered territory to Africa.[2]

[1] Capmany, *Questiones Criticas*. Quest 6.
[2] *Archives de Ind. en Sevilla.*

It was not for want of large vessels in the Spanish ports, therefore, that those of Columbus were of so small a size. He considered them best adapted to voyages of discovery, as they required but little depth of water, and therefore could more easily and safely coast unknown shores, and explore bays and rivers. He had some purposely constructed of a very small size for this service; such was the caravel, which in his third voyage he despatched to look out for an opening to the sea at the upper part of the Gulf of Paria, when the water grew too shallow for his vessel of 100 tons burden.

The most singular circumstance with respect to the ships of Columbus is that they should be open vessels: for it seems difficult to believe that a voyage of such extent and peril should be attempted in barks of so frail a construction. This, however, is expressly mentioned by Peter Martyr, in his Decades written at the time; and mention is made occasionally, in the memoirs relative to the voyages written by Columbus and his son, of certain of his vessels being without decks. He sometimes speaks of the same vessel as a ship and a caravel. There has been some discussion of late as to the precise meaning of the term "caravel." The Chevalier Bossi, in his dissertations on Columbus, observes that in the Mediterranean caravel designates the largest class of ships of war among the Mussulmans, and that in Portugal it means a small vessel of from 120 to 140 tons burden; but Columbus sometimes applies it to a vessel of forty tons.

Du Cange, in his glossary, considers it a word of Italian origin. Bossi thinks it either Turkish or Arabic, and probably introduced into the European languages by the Moors. Mr. Edward Everett, in a note to his Plymouth oration, considers that the true origin of the word is given in *Ferrarii Origines Linguæ Italicæ*, as follows: "Caravela, navigii minoris genus. Lat. Carabus: Græce Karabron."

That the word "caravel" was intended to signify a vessel of a small size is evident from a naval classification made by King Alonzo in the middle of the thirteenth century. In the first class he enumerates *Naos*, or large ships which

go only with sails, some of which have two masts, and others but one. In the second class smaller vessels, as Carracas, Fustas, Ballenares, Pinazas, *Carabelas*, etc. In the third class vessels with sails and oars, as Galleys, Galeots, Tardantes, and Saetias.[1]

Bossi gives a copy of a letter written by Columbus to Don Raphael Xansis, treasurer of the King of Spain, an edition of which exists in the public library at Milan. With this letter he gives several wood-cuts of sketches made with a pen, which accompanied this letter, and which he supposes to have been from the hand of Columbus. In these are represented vessels which are probably caravels. They have high bows and sterns, with castles on the latter. They have short masts with large square sails. One of them, besides sails, has benches of oars, and is probably intended to represent a galley. They are all evidently vessels of small size and light construction.

In a work called *Recherches sur le Commerce*, published in Amsterdam, 1779, is a plate representing a vessel of the latter part of the fifteenth century. It is taken from a picture in the church of St. Giovanni e Paolo in Venice. The vessel bears much resemblance to those said to have been sketched by Columbus; it has two masts, one of which is extremely small with a lateen sail. The mainmast has a large square sail. The vessel has a high poop and prow, is decked at each end, and is open in the centre.

It appears to be the fact, therefore, that most of the vessels with which Columbus undertook his long and perilous voyages were of this light and frail construction, and little superior to the small craft which ply on rivers and along coasts in modern days.

[1] Capmany, *Quest. Crit.*

VII. ROUTE OF COLUMBUS IN HIS FIRST VOYAGE [1]

It has hitherto been supposed that one of the Bahama Islands, at present bearing the name of San Salvador, and which is also known as Cat Island, was the first point where Columbus came in contact with the New World. Navarrete, however, in his Introduction to the *Collection of Spanish Voyages and Discoveries*, recently published at Madrid, has endeavoured to show that it must have been Turk's Island, one of the same group, situated about 100 leagues (of 20 to the degree) S.E. of San Salvador. Great care has been taken to examine candidly the opinion of Navarrete, comparing it with the journal of Columbus, as published in the above-mentioned work, and with the personal observations of the writer of this article, who has been much among these islands.

Columbus describes Guanahani, on which he landed, and to which he gave the name of San Salvador, as being a beautiful island, and very large; as being level, and covered with forests, many of the trees of which bore fruit; as having abundance of fresh water, and a large lake in the centre; that it was inhabited by a numerous population; that he proceeded for a considerable distance in his boats along the shore, which trended to the N.N.E., and as he passed, was visited by the inhabitants of several villages. Turk's Island does not answer to this description.

Turk's Island is a low key composed of sand and rocks, and lying north and south, less than two leagues in extent. It is utterly destitute of wood, and has not a single tree of native growth. It has no fresh water, the inhabitants

[1] The author of this work is indebted for this able examination of the route of Columbus to an officer of the navy of the United States, whose name he regrets the not being at liberty to mention. He has been greatly benefited, in various parts of this history, by nautical information from the same intelligent source.

depending entirely on cisterns and casks in which they preserve the rain; neither has it any lake, but several salt-ponds, which furnish the sole production of the island. Turk's Island cannot be approached on the east or north-east side, in consequence of the reef that surrounds it. It has no harbour, but has an open road on the west side, which vessels at anchor there have to leave and put to sea whenever the wind comes from any other quarter than that of the usual trade breeze of N.E. which blows over the island; for the shore is so bold that there is no anchorage except close to it; and when the wind ceases to blow from the land, vessels remaining at their anchors would be swung against the rocks, or forced high upon the shore, by the terrible surf that then prevails. The unfrequented road of the Hawk's Nest, at the south end of the island, is even more dangerous. This island, which is not susceptible of the slightest cultivation, furnishes a scanty subsistence to a few sheep and horses. The inhabitants draw all their consumption from abroad, with the exception of fish and turtle, which are taken in abundance, and supply the principal food of the slaves employed in the salt-works. The whole wealth of the island consists in the produce of the salt-ponds, and in the salvage and plunder of the many wrecks which take place in the neighbourhood. Turk's Island, therefore, would never be inhabited in a savage state of society, where commerce does not exist, and where men are obliged to draw their subsistence from the spot which they people.

Again: when about to leave Guanahani, Columbus was at a loss to choose which to visit of a great number of islands in sight. Now there is no land visible from Turk's Island, excepting the two salt keys which lie south of it, and with it form the group known as Turk's Islands. The journal of Columbus does not tell us what course he steered in going from Guanahani to Concepcion, but he states that it was five leagues distant from the former, and that the current was against him in sailing to it; whereas the distance from Turk's Island to the Gran Caico, supposed by Navarrete to be the Concepcion of Columbus, is nearly double, and the current sets constantly to the W.N.W.

among these islands, which would be favourable in going from Turk's Island to the Caicos.

From Concepcion, Columbus went next to an island which he saw nine leagues off in a westerly direction, to which he gave the name of Fernandina. This Navarrete takes to be Little Inagua, distant no less than twenty-two leagues from Gran Caico. Besides, in going to Little Inagua it would be necessary to pass quite close to three islands, each larger than Turk's Island, none of which are mentioned in the journal. Columbus describes Fernandina as stretching twenty-eight leagues S.E. and N.W.: whereas Little Inagua has its greatest length of four leagues in a S.W. direction. In a word, the description of Fernandina has nothing in common with Little Inagua. From Fernandina, Columbus sailed S.E. to Isabella, which Navarrete takes to be Great Inagua; whereas this latter bears S.W. from Little Inagua, a course differing 90° from the one followed by Columbus. Again: Columbus, on the 20th of November, takes occasion to say that Guanahani was distant eight leagues from Isabella; whereas Turk's Island is thirty-five leagues from Great Inagua.

Leaving Isabella, Columbus stood W.S.W. for the island of Cuba, and fell in with the Islas Arenas. This course drawn from Great Inagua would meet the coast of Cuba about Port Nipe: whereas Navarrete supposes that Columbus next fell in with the keys south of the Jumentos, and which bear W.N.W. from Inagua; a course differing 45° from the one steered by the ships. After sailing for some time in the neighbourhood of Cuba, Columbus finds himself, on the 14th of November, in the sea of Nuestra Señora, surrounded by so many islands that it was impossible to count them: whereas, on the same day, Navarrete places him off Cape Moa, where there is but one small island, and more than fifty leagues distant from any group that can possibly answer the description.

Columbus informs us that San Salvador was distant from Port Principe forty-five leagues: whereas Turk's Island is distant from the point, supposed by Navarrete to be the same, eighty leagues.

On taking leave of Cuba, Columbus remarks that he had followed its coast for an extent of 120 leagues. Deducting twenty leagues for his having followed its windings, there still remain 100. Now, Navarrete only supposes him to have coasted this island an extent of seventy leagues.

Such are the most important difficulties which the theory of Navarrete offers, and which appear insurmountable. Let us now take up the route of Columbus as recorded in his journal, and, with the best charts before us, examine how it agrees with the popular and traditional opinion, that he first landed on the island of San Salvador.

We learn from the journal of Columbus that, on the 11th of October, 1492, he continued steering W.S.W. until sunset, when he returned to his old course of west, the vessels running at the rate of three leagues an hour. At ten o'clock he and several of his crew saw a light, which seemed like a torch carried about on land. He continued running on four hours longer, and had made a distance of twelve leagues further west, when at two in the morning land was discovered ahead, distant two leagues. The twelve leagues which they ran since ten o'clock, with the two leagues distance from the land, form a total corresponding essentially with the distance and situation of Watling's Island from San Salvador; and it is thence presumed that the light seen at that hour was on Watling's Island, which they were then passing. Had the light been seen on land ahead, and they had kept running on four hours at the rate of three leagues an hour, they must have run high and dry on shore. As the admiral himself received the royal reward for having seen this light, as the first discovery of land, Watling's Island is believed to be the point for which this premium was granted.

On making land, the vessels were hove to until daylight of the same 12th of October; they then anchored off an island of great beauty, covered with forests, and extremely populous.

It was called Guanahani by the natives, but Columbus gave it the name of San Salvador. Exploring its coast,

where it ran to the N.N.E., he found a harbour capable of sheltering any number of ships. This description corresponds minutely with the S.E. part of the island known as San Salvador, or Cat Island, which lies east and west, bending at its eastern extremity to the N.N.E., and has the same verdant and fertile appearance. The vessels had probably drifted into this bay at the S.E. side of San Salvador, on the morning of the 12th, while lying to for daylight; nor did Columbus, while remaining at the island, or when sailing from it, open the land so as to discover that what he had taken for its whole length was but a bend at one end of it, and that the main body of the island lay behind, stretching far to the N.W. From Guanahani, Columbus saw so many other islands that he was at a loss which next to visit. The Indians signified that they were innumerable, and mentioned the names of above a hundred. He determined to go to the largest in sight, which appeared to be about five leagues distant; some of the others were nearer, and some further off. The island thus selected, it is presumed, was the present island of Concepcion; and that the others were that singular belt of small islands, known as La Cadena (or the chain), stretching past the island of San Salvador in a S.E. and N.W. direction; the nearest of the group being nearer than Concepcion, while the rest are more distant.

Leaving San Salvador in the afternoon of the 14th for the island thus selected, the ships lay by during the night, and did not reach it until late in the following day, being retarded by adverse currents. Columbus gave this island the name of Santa Maria de la Concepcion; he does not mention either its bearings from San Salvador, or the course which he steered in going to it. We know that in all this neighbourhood the current sets strongly and constantly to the W.N.W.; and since Columbus had the current against him, he must have been sailing in an opposite direction, or to the E.S.E. Besides, when near Concepcion, Columbus sees another island to the westward, the largest he had yet seen; but he tells us that he anchored off Concepcion, and did not stand for this larger island, because he could not have sailed to the west.

Hence it is rendered certain that Columbus did not sail westward in going from San Salvador to Concepcion; for, from the opposition of the wind, as there could be no other cause, he could not sail toward that quarter. Now, on reference to the chart, we find the island at present known as Concepcion situated E.S.E. from San Salvador, and at a corresponding distance of five leagues.

Leaving Concepcion on the 16th of October, Columbus steered for a very large island seen to the westward nine leagues off, and which extended itself twenty-eight leagues in a S.E. and N.W. direction. He was becalmed the whole day, and did not reach the island until the following morning, 17th of October. He named it Fernandina. At noon he made sail again, with a view to run round it, and reach another island called Samoet; but the wind being at S.E. by S., the course he wished to steer, the natives signified that it would be easier to sail round this island by running to the N.W. with a fair wind. He therefore bore up to the N.W., and having run two leagues found a marvellous port, with a narrow entrance, or rather with two entrances, for there was an island which shut it in completely, forming a noble basin within. Sailing out of this harbour by the opposite entrance at the N.W., he discovered that part of the island which runs east and west. The natives signified to him that this island was smaller than Samoet, and that it would be better to return toward the latter. It had now become calm, but shortly after there sprung up a breeze from W.N.W., which was ahead for the course they had been steering; so they bore up and stood to the E.S.E. in order to get an offing; for the weather threatened a storm, which, however, dissipated itself in rain. The next day, being the 18th of October, they anchored opposite the extremity of Fernandina.

The whole of this description answers most accurately to the island of Exuma, which lies south from San Salvador and S.W. by S. from Concepcion. The only inconsistency is that Columbus states that Fernandina bore nearly west from Concepcion, and was twenty-eight leagues in extent. This mistake must have proceeded from his having taken

the long chain of keys called La Cadena for part of the same Exuma; which continuous appearance they naturally assume when seen from Concepcion, for they run in the same S.E. and N.W. direction. Their bearings, when seen from the same point, are likewise westerly as well as south-westerly. As a proof that such was the case, it may be observed that, after having approached these islands, instead of the extent of Fernandina being increased to his eye, he now remarks that it was twenty leagues long, whereas before it was estimated by him at twenty-eight; he now discovers that instead of one island there were many, and alters his course southerly to reach the one that was most conspicuous.

The identity of the island here described with Exuma is irresistibly forced upon the mind. The distance from Concepcion, the remarkable port with an island in front of it, and further on its coast turning off to the westward, are all so accurately delineated that it would seem as though the chart had been drawn from the description of Columbus.

On the 19th of October the ships left Fernandina, steering S.E. with the wind at north. Sailing three hours on this course, they discovered Samoet to the east, and steered for it, arriving at its north point before noon. Here they found a little island surrounded by rocks, with another reef of rocks lying between it and Samoet. To Samoet, Columbus gave the name of Isabella, and to the point of it opposite the little island, that of Cabo del Isleo; the cape at the S.W. point of Samoet, Columbus called Cabo de Laguna, and off this last his ships were brought to anchor. The little island lay in the direction from Fernandina to Isabella, east and west. The coast from the small island lay westerly twelve leagues to a cape, which Columbus called Fermosa from its beauty; this he believed to be an island apart from Samoet or Isabella, with another one between them. Leaving Cabo Laguna, where he remained until the 20th of October, Columbus steered to the N.E. toward Cabo del Isleo, but meeting with shoals inside the small island, he did not come to anchor until the day following. Near this

extremity of Isabella they found a lake, from which the ships were supplied with water.

This island of Isabella, or Samoet, agrees so accurately in its description with Isla Larga, which lies east of Exuma, that it is only necessary to read it with the chart unfolded to be convinced of the identity.

Having resolved to visit the island which the natives called Cuba, and described as bearing W.S.W. from Isabella, Columbus left Cabo del Isleo at midnight the commencement of the 24th of October, and shaped his course accordingly to the W.S.W. The wind continued light, with rain, until noon, when it freshened up, and in the evening Cape Verde, the S.W. point of Fernandina, bore N.W. distant seven leagues. As the night became tempestuous, he lay to until morning, drifting according to the reckoning two leagues.

On the morning of the 25th he made sail again to W.S.W., until nine o'clock, when he had run five leagues; he then steered west until three, when he had run eleven leagues, at which hour land was discovered, consisting of seven or eight keys lying north and south, and distant five leagues from the ships. Here he anchored the next day, south of these islands, which he called Islas de Arena; they were low, and five or six leagues in extent.

The distances run by Columbus, added to the departure taken from Fernandina and the distance from these islands of Arena at the time of discovering, give a sum of thirty leagues. This sum of thirty leagues is about three less than the distance from the S.W. point of Fernandina or Exuma, whence Columbus took his departure, to the group of Mucaras, which lie east of Cayo Lobo on the grand bank of Bahama, and which correspond to the description of Columbus. If it were necessary to account for the difference of three leagues in a reckoning, where so much is given on conjecture, it would readily occur to a seaman that an allowance of two leagues for drift, during a long night of blowy weather, is but a small one. The course from Exuma to the Mucaras is about S.W. by W. The course followed by Columbus differs a little from this, but as it was his intention, on setting sail from Isabella,

to steer W.S.W., and since he afterward altered it to west, we may conclude that he did so in consequence of having been run out of his course to the southward, while lying to the night previous.

Oct. 27.—At sunrise Columbus set sail from the isles Arenas or Mucaras, for an island called Cuba, steering S.S.W. At dark, having made seventeen leagues on that course, he saw the land, and hove his ships to until morning. On the 28th he made sail again at S.S.W., and entered a beautiful river with a fine harbour, which he named San Salvador. The journal in this part does not describe the localities with the minuteness with which everything has hitherto been noted; the text also is in several places obscure.

This port of San Salvador we take to be the one now known as Caravelas Grandes, situated eight leagues west of Neuvitas del Principe. Its bearings and distance from the Mucaras coincide exactly with those run by Columbus; and its description agrees, as far as can be ascertained by charts, with the port which he visited.

Oct. 29.—Leaving this port, Columbus stood to the west, and having sailed six leagues, he came to a point of the island running N.W., which we take to be the Punta Gorda; and, ten leagues further, another stretching easterly, which will be Punta Curiana. One league further he discovered a small river, and beyond this another very large one, to which he gave the name of Rio de Mares. This river emptied into a fine basin resembling a lake, and having a bold entrance: it had for landmarks two round mountains at the S.W., and to the W.N.W. a bold promontory, suitable for a fortification, which projected far into the sea. This we take to be the fine harbour and river situated west of Point Curiana; its distance corresponds with that run by Columbus from Caravelas Grandes, which we have supposed identical with Port San Salvador. Leaving Rio de Mares the 30th of October, Columbus stood to the N.W. for fifteen leagues, when he saw a cape, to which he gave the name of Cabo de Palmas. This, we believe, is the one which forms the eastern entrance to Laguna de Moron. Beyond this cape was a river, distant,

according to the natives, four days' journey from the town of Cuba; Columbus determined, therefore, to make for it.

Having lain to all night, he reached the river on the 31st of October, but found that it was too shallow to admit his ships. This is supposed to be what is now known as Laguna de Moron. Beyond this was a cape surrounded by shoals, and another projected still further out. Between these two capes was a bay capable of receiving small vessels. The identity here of the description with the coast near Laguna de Moron seems very clear. The cape east of Laguna de Moron coincides with Cape Palmas, the Laguna de Moron with the shoal river described by Columbus; and in the western point of entrance, with the island of Cabrion opposite it, we recognise the two projecting capes he speaks of, with what appeared to be a bay between them. This all is a remarkable combination, difficult to be found anywhere but in the same spot which Columbus visited and described. Further, the coast from the port of San Salvador had run west to Rio de Mares, a distance of seventeen leagues, and from Rio de Mares it had extended N.W. fifteen leagues to Cabo de Palmas; all of which agrees fully with what has been here supposed. The wind having shifted to north, which was contrary to the course they had been steering, the vessels bore up and returned to Rio de Mares.

On the 12th of November the ships sailed out of Rio de Mares to go in quest of Babeque, an island believed to abound in gold, and to lie E. by S. from that port. Having sailed eight leagues with a fair wind, they came to a river, in which may be recognised the one which lies just west of Punta Gorda. Four leagues further they saw another, which they called Rio del Sol. It appeared very large, but they did not stop to examine it, as the wind was fair to advance. This we take to be the river now known as Sabana. Columbus was now retracing his steps, and had made twelve leagues from Rio de Mares, but in going west from Port San Salvador to Rio de Mares he had run seventeen leagues. San Salvador, therefore, remains five leagues east of Rio del Sol; and, accordingly, on

reference to the chart, we find Caravelas Grandes situated a corresponding distance from Sabana.

Having run six leagues from Rio del Sol, which makes in all eighteen leagues from Rio de Mares, Columbus came to a cape which he called Cabo de Cuba, probably from supposing it to be the extremity of that island. This corresponds precisely in distance from Punta Curiana with the lesser islands of Guajava, situated near Cuba, and between which and the greater Guajava Columbus must have passed in running in for Port San Salvador. Either he did not notice it, from his attention being engrossed by the magnificent island before him, or, as is also possible, his vessels may have been drifted through the passage, which is two leagues wide, while lying to the night previous to their arrival at Port San Salvador.

On the 13th of November, having hove to all night, in the morning the ships passed a point two leagues in extent, and then entered into a gulf that made into the S.S.W., and which Columbus thought separated Cuba from Bohio. At the bottom of the gulf was a large basin between two mountains. He could not determine whether or not this was an arm of the sea; for not finding shelter from the north wind, he put to sea again. Hence it would appear that Columbus must have partly sailed round the smaller Guajava, which he took to be the extremity of Cuba, without being aware that a few hours' sail would have taken him, by this channel, to Port San Salvador, his first discovery in Cuba, and so back to the same Rio del Sol which he had passed the day previous. Of the two mountains seen on both sides of this entrance, the principal one corresponds with the peak called Alto de Juan Daune, which lies seven leagues west of Punta de Maternillos. The wind continuing north, he stood east fourteen leagues from Cape Cuba, which we have supposed the lesser island of Guajava. It is here rendered sure that the point of little Guajava was believed by him to be the extremity of Cuba; for he speaks of the land mentioned as lying to leeward of the above-mentioned gulf as being the island of Bohio, and says that he discovered twenty leagues of it running E.S.E. and W.N.W.

On the 14th of November, having lain to all night with a N.E. wind, he determined to seek a port, and if he found none, to return to those which he had left in the island of Cuba; for it will be remembered that all east of little Guajava he supposed to be Bohio. He steered E. by S., therefore, six leagues, and then stood in for the land. Here he saw many ports and islands; but as it blew fresh, with a heavy sea, he dared not enter, but ran down the coast N.W. by W. for a distance of eighteen leagues, where he saw a clear entrance and a port, in which he stood S.S.W. and afterward S.E., the navigation being all clear and open. Here Columbus beheld so many islands that it was impossible to count them. They were very lofty, and covered with trees. Columbus called the neighbouring sea Mar de Nuestra Señora, and to the harbour near the entrance to these islands he gave the name of Puerto del Principe. This harbour he says he did not enter until the Sunday following, which was four days after. This part of the text of Columbus's journal is confused, and there are also anticipations, as if it had been written subsequently, or mixed together in copying. It appears evident that while lying to the night previous, with the wind at N.E., the ships had drifted to the N.W., and been carried by the powerful current of the Bahama channel far in the same direction. When they bore up, therefore, to return to the ports which they had left in the island of Cuba, they fell in to leeward of them, and now first discovered the numerous group of islands of which Cayo Romano is the principal. The current of this channel is of itself sufficient to have carried the vessels to the westward a distance of twenty leagues, which is what they had run easterly since leaving Cape Cuba, or Guajava, for it had acted upon them during a period of thirty hours. There can be no doubt as to the identity of these keys with those about Cayo Romano; for they are the only ones in the neighbourhood of Cuba that are not of a low and swampy nature, but large and lofty. They enclose a free, open navigation, and abundance of fine harbours, in late years the resort of pirates, who found security and concealment for themselves and their prizes in the recesses

of these lofty keys. From the description of Columbus, the vessels must have entered between the islands of Baril and Pacedon, and sailing along Cayo Romano on a S.E. course, have reached in another day their old cruising ground in the neighbourhood of lesser Guajava. Not only Columbus does not tell us here of his having changed his anchorage among these keys, but his journal does not even mention his having anchored at all, until the return from the ineffectual search after Babeque. It is clear, from what has been said, that it was not in Port Principe that the vessels anchored on this occasion; but it could not have been very distant, since Columbus went from the ships in his boats on the 18th of November to place a cross at its entrance. He had probably seen the entrance from without when sailing east from Guajava on the 13th of November. The identity of this port with the one now known as Neuvitas el Principe seems certain, from the description of its entrance. Columbus, it appears, did not visit its interior.

On the 19th of November the ships sailed again, in quest of Babeque. At sunset Port Principe bore S.S.W. distant seven leagues, and having sailed all night at N.E. by N. and until ten o'clock of the next day (20th of November), they had run a distance of fifteen leagues on that course. The wind blowing from E.S.E., which was the direction in which Babeque was supposed to lie, and the weather being foul, Columbus determined to return to Port Principe, which was then distant twenty-five leagues. He did not wish to go to Isabella, distant only twelve leagues, lest the Indians whom he had brought from San Salvador, which lay eight leagues from Isabella, should make their escape. Thus, in sailing N.E. by N. from near Port Principe, Columbus had approached within a short distance of Isabella. That island was then, according to his calculations, thirty-seven leagues from Port Principe, and San Salvador was forty-five leagues from the same point. The first differs but eight leagues from the truth, the latter nine; or from the actual distance of Neuvitas el Principe from Isla Larga and San Salvador. Again, let us now call to mind the course made by

Columbus in going from Isabella to Cuba; it was first W.S.W., then W., and afterward S.S.W. Having consideration for the different distances run on each, these yield a medium course not materially different from S.W. Sailing then S.W. from Isabella, Columbus had reached Port San Salvador, on the coast of Cuba. Making afterward a course of N.E. by N. from off Port Principe, he was going in the direction of Isabella. Hence we deduce that Port San Salvador, on the coast of Cuba, lay west of Port Principe, and the whole combination is thus bound together and established. The two islands seen by Columbus at ten o'clock of the same 20th of November, must have been some of the keys which lie west of the Jumentos. Running back toward Port Principe, Columbus made it at dark, but found that he had been carried to the westward by the currents. This furnishes a sufficient proof of the strength of the current in the Bahama channel; for it will be remembered that he ran over to Cuba with a fair wind. After contending for four days, until the 24th of November, with light winds against the force of these currents, he arrived at length opposite the level island whence he had set out the week before when going to Babeque.

We are thus accidentally informed that the point from which Columbus started in search of Babeque was the same island of Guajava the lesser, which lies west of Neuvitas el Principe. Further: at first he dared not enter into the opening between the two mountains, for it seemed as though the sea broke upon them; but having sent the boat ahead, the vessels followed in at S.W. and then W. into a fine harbour. The level island lay north of it, and with another island formed a secure basin capable of sheltering all the navy of Spain. This level island resolves itself, then, into our late Cape Cuba, which we have supposed to be little Guajava, and the entrance east of it becomes identical with the gulf above mentioned which lay between two mountains, one of which we have supposed the Alto de Juan Daune, and which gulf appeared to divide Cuba from Bohio. Our course now becomes a plain one. On the 26th of November, Columbus sailed

from Santa Catalina (the name given by him to the port last described) at sunrise, and stood for the cape at the S.E., which he called Cabo de Pico. In this it is easy to recognise the high peak already spoken of as the Alto de Juan Daune. Arrived off this he saw another cape, distant fifteen leagues, and still further another five leagues beyond it, which he called Cabo de Campana. The first must be that now known as Point Padre, the second Point Mulas: their distances from Alto de Juan Daune are underrated; but it requires no little experience to estimate correctly the distances of the bold headlands of Cuba, as seen through the pure atmosphere that surrounds the island.

Having passed Point Mulas in the night, on the 27th Columbus looked into the deep bay that lies S.E. of it, and seeing the bold projecting headland that makes out between Port Nipe and Port Banes, with those deep bays on each side of it, he supposed it to be an arm of the sea dividing one land from another with an island between them.

Having landed at Taco for a short time, Columbus arrived in the evening of the 27th at Baracoa, to which he gave the name of Puerto Santo. From Cabro del Pico to Puerto Santo, a distance of sixty leagues, he had passed no fewer than nine good ports and five rivers to Cape Campana, and thence to Puerto Santo eight more rivers, each with a good port; all of which may be found on the chart between Alto de Juan Daune and Baracoa. By keeping near the coast he had been assisted to the S.E. by the eddy current of the Bahama channel. Sailing from Puerto Santo or Baracoa on the 4th of December, he reached the extremity of Cuba the following day, and striking off upon a wind to the S.E. in search of Babeque, which lay to the N.E., he came in sight of Bohio, to which he gave the name of Hispaniola.

On taking leave of Cuba, Columbus tells us that he had coasted it a distance of 120 leagues. Allowing twenty leagues of this distance for his having followed the undulations of the coast, the remaining 100 measured from Point Maysi fall exactly upon Cabrion Key, which

we have supposed the western boundary of his discoveries.

The astronomical observations of Columbus form no objection to what has been here advanced; for he tells us that the instrument which he made use of to measure the meridian altitudes of the heavenly bodies was out of order and not to be depended upon. He places his first discovery, Guanahani, in the latitude of Ferro, which is about 27° 30′ north. San Salvador we find in 24° 30′, and Turk's Island in 21° 30′: both are very wide of the truth, but it is certainly easier to conceive an error of three than one of six degrees.

Laying aside geographical demonstration, let us now examine how historical records agree with the opinion here supported, that the island of San Salvador was the first point where Columbus came in contact with the New World. Herrera, who is considered the most faithful and authentic of Spanish historians, wrote his History of the Indies toward the year 1600. In describing the voyage of Juan Ponce de Leon, made to Florida in 1512, he makes the following remarks: "Leaving Aguada in Porto Rico, they steered to the N.W. by N., and in five days arrived at an island called El Viejo, in latitude 22° 30′ north. The next day they arrived at a small island of the Lucayos, called Caicos. On the eighth day they anchored at another island called Yaguna in 24°, on the eighth day out from Porto Rico. Thence they passed to the island of Manuega, in 24° 30′, and on the eleventh day they reached Guanahani, which is in 25° 40′ north. This island of Guanahani was the first discovered by Columbus on his first voyage, and which he called San Salvador." This is the substance of the remarks of Herrera, and is entirely conclusive as to the location of San Salvador. The latitudes, it is true, are all placed higher than we now know them to be; that of San Salvador being such as to correspond with no other land than that now known as the Berry Islands, which are seventy leagues distant from the nearest coast of Cuba; whereas Columbus tells us that San Salvador was only forty-five leagues from Port Principe. But in those

infant days of navigation, the instruments for measuring the altitudes of the heavenly bodies, and the tables of declinations for deducing the latitude, must have been so imperfect as to place the most scientific navigator of the time below the most mechanical one of the present.

The second island arrived at by Ponce de Leon, in his north-western course, was one of the Caicos; the first one, then called El Viejo, must have been Turk's Island, which lies S.E. of the Caicos. The third island they came to was probably Mariguana; the fourth, Crooked Island; and the fifth, Isla Larga. Lastly they came to Guanahani, the San Salvador of Columbus. If this be supposed identical with Turk's Island, where do we find the succession of islands touched at by Ponce de Leon on his way from Porto Rico to San Salvador?[1] No stress has been laid, in these remarks, on the identity of name which has been preserved to San Salvador, Concepcion, and Port Principe, with those given by Columbus, though traditional usage is of vast weight in such matters. Geographical proof, of a conclusive kind it is thought, has

[1] *Note to the Revised Edition of* 1848.—The Baron de Humboldt in his *Examen Critique de l'histoire de la géographie du nouveau contínent*, published in 1837, speaks repeatedly in high terms of the ability displayed in the above examination of the route of Columbus, and argues at great length and quite conclusively in support of the opinion contained in it. Above all, he produces a document hitherto unknown, and the great importance of which had been discovered by M. Valeknaer and himself in 1832. This is a map made in 1500 by that able mariner Juan de la Cosa, who accompanied Columbus in his second voyage and sailed with other of the discoverers. In this map, of which the Baron de Humboldt gives an engraving, the islands as laid down agree completely with the bearings and distances given in the journal of Columbus, and establishes the identity of San Salvador, or Cat Island, and Guanahani.

"I feel happy," says M. de Humboldt, "to be enabled to destroy the incertitudes (which rested on this subject) by a document as ancient as it is unknown; a document which confirms irrevocably the arguments which Mr. Washington Irving has given in his work against the hypotheses of the Turk's Island."

In the present revised edition the author feels at liberty to give the merit of the very masterly paper on the route of Columbus where it is justly due. It was furnished him at Madrid by the late commander Alexander Slidel Mackenzie, of the United States navy, whose modesty shrunk from affixing his name to an article so calculated to do him credit, and which has since challenged the high eulogiums of men of nautical science.

been advanced, to enable the world to remain in its old hereditary belief that the present island of San Salvador is the spot where Columbus first set foot upon the New World. Established opinions of the kind should not be lightly molested. It is a good old rule, that ought to be kept in mind in curious research as well as territorial dealings, "Do not disturb the ancient landmarks."

NOTES

(Taken from "The Spanish Conquest in America")

Note I. p. 8.

This Peter Martyr must not be confounded with the Peter Martyr who took a prominent part in the Reformation. Our historian is Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, a Milanese born in 1455 at Arona, on the Lago Maggiore.

Having finished his education, he went to Rome, where he entered into the service of Cardinal Visconti, and where he remained ten years. From Rome, accompanying a Spanish ambassador, Peter Martyr went to the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, by whom he was well received. This was in the year 1487.

His career was thenceforward mixed up with the greatest affairs of Spain, which he had good opportunities of observing, as he was one of those persons, common in that age, unhappily uncommon in ours, who in their time play many parts. He was a soldier, a schoolmaster, an ambassador, a statesman, a priest, an historian, and a gossiping man of letters, who reminds the English reader occasionally of Horace Walpole and of Mr. Pepys. He delighted in the society of the great, and he was upon the frankest and most intimate terms with them.

A very learned and penetrating historian has thrown the gravest doubts upon Peter Martyr's writings. "Whoever," he says, "will take the trouble of comparing the first two letters in the decades of Peter Martyr with any authentic history, will perceive that they are a very negligent and palpable imposture, every date being falsified, even that of the year in which Columbus made his great discovery. It is a strange instance of oversight

in Robertson that he has uniformly quoted them as written at the time, for the least attention must have shown him the contrary." (Hallam's Introduction to the *Lit. of Europe*, vol. i. cap. 4.)

Mr. Hallam's suspicions, very reasonably entertained, have in my judgment been entirely confuted by Mr. Prescott (see *Hist. of Ferdinand and Isabella*, fourth edition, vol. ii. p. 68), and by anticipation in the prologue of the Spanish historian Muñoz (*Hist. del Nuevo-Mundo*, Madrid, 1793).

Note II. p. 52.

Las Casas, *Historia general de las Indias*, MS., lib. i. cap. 17. The original of this work is to be found in the library of the Royal Academy of History at Madrid. Four or five copies have been taken, of which the author possesses one. It is a work of the highest historical value, as Las Casas saw with his own eyes, and was himself engaged in, many of the transactions which he narrates; and, moreover, he had taken care to collect contemporary documents relating to important events, which have since perished.

The course of the narrative is often broken by outbursts of generous indignation at the treatment of the Indians, or by laborious trains of argument to prove that they were free men. These parts, therefore, of the history, which were very fitly addressed to the reader of his own time, have ceased to interest the modern reader, who is generally too much disposed to agree with Las Casas to care to listen to his arguments or his denunciations. Occasionally, as will be seen, the narrative is admirable, sparkling with the vivacity and intelligence of the writer, and adequately expressing the deep concern which he took in his subject. Indeed, his history is in great part his autobiography.

It would be surprising that a work of such value should not have been printed, but for the fact that Herrera, the royal historiographer of the Indies in the seventeenth

century, has made the greatest use of Las Casas, weaving in long extracts from the *Historia General*, taken almost verbatim.

Note III. p. 66.

Cipango, or Zipangu, is described as an island in Marco Polo's *Travels* (book iii. cap. 2). "The name which is here, as well as in the British Museum and Berlin manuscripts, written Zipangu, in the Basle edition Zipangri, in the older Latin Cyampagu, and in the early Italian epitomes Cimpagu, is evidently intended for those islands which we in a collective sense term Japan." (See *Travels of Marco Polo*, by Wm. Marsden, 1818.)

From the pleadings in the cause between the Fiscal (the Treasury) of Spain and Don Diego Columbus, the son and heir of the great discoverer, we learn how this word Cipango or Cipanso was impressed upon the mind of Columbus. "Otra pregunta dice que si saben que habia dado aviso Cristoval Colon al Martin Alonso destas Indias por la dicha escriptura que dijo ser del tiempo de Salomon, que contenia navegadas por el mar Mediterraneo hasta el fin de España y allí al poniente del sol entre el norte y el Mediodiá por via *temporada* hasta noventa y cinco grados di camino é falláras una tierra de Cipanso la cual es tan fertil y abundosa é con su grandeza sojuzgará á Africa y Europa." (Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, lib. i. cap. 34.)

Note IV. p. 67.

The following passage is particularly referred to by Ferdinand Columbus: "Et dicit Aristoteles ut mare parvum est inter finem Hispaniæ a parte occidentis et inter principium Indiæ a parte orientis. Et non loquitur de Hispaniâ citeriori, quæ nunc Hispania communiter dicitur, sed de Hispaniâ, ulteriori, quæ nunc Africa dicitur." (Aliaco, *Imago Mun di Capitulem Octavum.*)

Note V. p. 145.

I do not venture to give an explanation of his meaning in this passage: the exact words are "adonde en anoche ciendo tenia la estrella del norte en cinco grados." (*See* Navarrete, *Col.*, tom. i. p. 246.)

As it would be desirable, however, not only for the history of navigation, but even for the purposes of present science, to understand the observations taken by Columbus in this memorable voyage, I shall point out some of the difficulties, leaving it for those persons who have studied the instruments and the modes of observation in use at the latter end of the fifteenth century to remove, if possible, these difficulties.

It is said by those who have studied the route of Columbus in this voyage, that he never went below the eighth degree of latitude.

Now if we may infer from the words "the north star was in five degrees" that Columbus, aware of the fact that the altitude of the pole equals the latitude of the place, was taking the latitude, and found it to be 5°—this, though a great error, would not be an inadmissible one. A combination of bad instruments and bad methods, in the hands of a bad observer, might give an error of two or three degrees. There is, however, a curious statement of Navarrete's, that Columbus's instruments gave double altitudes—which would increase the difficulty. I must leave this part of the question to astronomers. Navarrete's words are: "Los cuadrantes del aquel tiempo median la doble altura; y per consiguiente los 42° que dice distaba de la equinoccial hácia el N. deben reducirse á 21° de latitud N., que es con corta diferencia el parelelo per donde navegaba colon." (Nav., *Col.*, tom. i. p. 44 n.)

Again, from other passages it appears that Columbus, in the course of this voyage, was taking the polar distance of the north star, upon which, as will hereafter be seen, he based a false theory of the earth not being a true sphere, but pear shaped. M. Humboldt thus

describes the error of Columbus: "Mais les explications qu'il hasardait de quelques fausses observations de la polaire faites dans le voisinage des îles Açores; sur les passages supérieurs et inférieurs de l'étoile, et son hypothese de la figure non sphérique et irregulière de la terre, qui est *renflée* dans une certaine partie de la zone équatoriale vers la côte de Paria, prouvent qu'il était bien faible dans les premières notions géometriques." (*Examen Critique*, vol. iii. p. 17.)

It is, however, to be remarked, that this first observation, alluded to in the text, occurs, as I conceive, or may have occurred, separately from the false observations referred to by M. Humboldt. These are mentioned further on in the narrative: "Fallé allí que en anocheciendo tenia yo la estrella del Norte alta cinco grados, y estonces las guardas estaban encima de la cabeza, y despues á la media noche fallaba la estrella alta diez grados, y en amaneciendo que les guardas estaban en los piés quince.

"La suavelidad de la mar fallé conforme, mas no en la yaba; en esto de la estrella del Norte tomé grande admiracion, y por esto muchas noctes con muncha diligencia tornaba yo á repricar la vista della con el cuadrante, y siempre fallé que carà el plomo y hilo á un punto." (Nav., *Col.*, tom. i. p. 255.) The real polar distance of the north star is 1° 38′ 47″.

It is to be remarked that Columbus, in the above passage, states that he made several observations, and that the north star at nightfall was always in 5°. The track of his voyage, carefully made from his own narrative, is for a very long distance together in the same parallel of latitude.

I have consulted an eminent person in science, who says, "I have no doubt that in the fifteenth century a small handful of degrees was no uncommon error in the observations of an ordinary seaman—and we know nothing of Columbus, as an observer, which should induce us to force any presumptions in his favour." For my own part, though inclined, with Peter Martyr, to touch the matter "with a dry foot" ("De poli etiam

varietate quædam refert, quæ . . . sicco pertingam pede"), I cannot help thinking that Columbus was not so much out in all his observations in this third voyage as from the above he appears to be. It would be worth while for some eminent cosmographer to take this voyage of Columbus and illustrate it carefully. It is not often in the world's history that a series of observations has led to more immediate and practical results.

NOTE VI. p. 165.

"Hope in him who created all men sustains me: his succour was always very speedy. At another time, and not long ago, when I was lower still, he raised me up with his divine arm, saying, 'O man of little faith, arise, it is I, be not afraid'" (translation). (Navarrete, *Col.*, tom. i. p. 265.)

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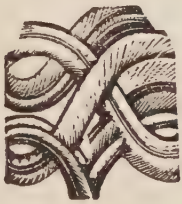

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